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THE BALTIC,

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AND

THE CRIMEA:

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COMPRISING TRAVELS IN RUSSIA, A VOYAGE DOWN THE VOLGA TO ASTRACHAN, AND A TOUR THROUGH CRIM TARTARY.

BY

CHARLES HENRY SCOTT.

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PREFACE.

THE hostilities now raging in the Baltic and Black Sea—the mighty influences, for good or for evil, which they must exercise over the future destinies of Europe—and, above all, the deep sympathy which carries the thoughts and hearts of nearly every family in great Britain to some dear relative or friend engaged in the dangers of so terrible a contest, naturally create an intense and absorbing interest in everything connected with the Russian Empire. A craving after further information is thus produced concerning a country, the government of which has ventured to outrage the opinion of the world, by violating all international law, and by rushing into a deadly struggle with the most powerful nations of Europe, to uphold principles which have their foundation neither in morality nor justice.

These considerations furnish my excuse for placing this Volume before the public. My original notes were thrown aside until a few weeks since, when, on reperusal (believing them to contain some fresh matter which may prove acceptable to the reader, while adding to the very scanty stock of knowledge

existing in relation to the remote regions of the Muscovite dominions), I determined to publish them.

The book has no pretensions, beyond giving a faithful narrative of things and places seen and visited, with the impressions to which they gave rise; and some short sketches of the various races encountered in these wanderings. Tedious details of the numerous trifling incidents inseparable from every long tour have been avoided as much as possible.

The voyage down the Volga from Nijni-Novgorod to Astrachan has never before been accomplished in the same manner by any travellers who have published their experiences; and I know of no English work which speaks of the author having visited the latter town at all. The Don Cossack and Noguai Tartar districts are also fields but seldom traversed, and little known.

The Crimea (a country replete with sorrowful remembrances, and stirring associations) appears destined to become the theatre of exciting and important events: a circumstance that may give additional interest to my description of that peninsula, which possesses so many attractions for the archæologist, the historian, and the admirer of the sublime, the picturesque, and the beautiful in scenery.

PARIS, AUGUST 15TH, 1854.

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THE BALTIC, THE BLACK SEA, AND THE CRIMEA.

CHAPTER I.

Leave Stockholm—Fortress of Waxholm—The Aland Islands—Reach Abo—A knowing Innkeeper—An Old Cathedral and New Church—Modern Town of Abo—Helsingfors—A View from the Harbour—Fortress of Sweaborg—Admiral Cronstadt—Alexander and the Fins—A mistake of Europe—A striking Change—Revel—Cronstadt.

On the 2nd of July, 1850, after having passed nearly a month in Stockholm, I embarked with my friend, Mr. Gordon of Pitlurg, on board a small wretched steam-boat, to cross the Baltic to Finland. We had already visited the whole of the islands of Denmark, enjoyed some beautiful scenery in Sweden, and now proposed taking a long tour in the Russian dominions.

The ordinary passenger-boat, from some unexplained cause, had ceased running, and we were compelled to take our berths in the little "Abo," which looked as old as the town whence its name was derived. Fortunately, from an early application, we

succeeded in securing the only two diminutive sleeping-cabins, and so far escaped the misery which fell to the lot of our fellow-passengers.

A lovely morning had followed the soft twilight, which at this season and in this clime banishes the deep shades of the night; and the fresh bracing air sweeping over the Malar Lake seemed to add vigour to the body, as the bright, clear atmosphere gave exhilaration to the spirits. Six o'clock, the hour of departure, arrived, and shortly after we cast off from the quay.

The fair city of Stockholm, with her white houses, surmounted by her handsome palace, sprang like a beautiful virgin from the midst of the waters, joyous and gay. We left her with regret; for we had spent a happy time amongst her kind-hearted people; had partaken of all the festivities attending the marriage of the heir to the throne; and witnessed the demonstrations of loyalty displayed by a grateful people, to a good king, and a popular Crown Prince.

On our left we passed the deer park, with its noble trees and picturesque villas, the retreat of the idle, and the resort of the pleasure-seekers; while on the right were brown rocks, sterile and wild, only relieved by the dark green of some stunted firs, whose scanty wants were scarcely supplied from the barren crevices into which their roots had struck. For many miles we sailed through scenery rapidly changing in appearance, but constant in beauty. Now the blue dancing

water expanded into a charming lake, now contracted into a narrow passage guarded by peaks of granite, against which the white foam dashed. Here was a secluded little bay; and there a dozen small islands, some naked and blear, others wooded and green.

At length we reached Waxholm, a strongly fortified island; the first outwork of Sweden on the side of Russia, and beneath the very guns of which a steam frigate of the Czar's was lying. This fortress commands the only channel by which large ships can pass, and is in a position naturally powerful.

Sweaborg has long since been lost; Aland has shared the same fate; and Waxholm has probably been regarded with no indifferent feelings by the possessor of those other strongholds, the rightful property of Sweden. Be that as it may, this great sentinel which guards the portals of freedom from the encroachments of despotism, seemed to have a fixed frown, alike for friend or for foe, which the glowing sun of the morning could not chase from its brow.

For some distance after entering the Baltic we steered through innumerable islands and islets; some peeping out from the surface of the water, others presenting high peaks and bold fronts; while the white sails of the fishermen's boats ever and anon burst into view, soon again to be lost to the sight. And well it was that these pleasing objects were there to enliven us, for our miserable little tub crept lazily along, and midnight had almost arrived ere we

touched at one of the Aland group, where we stopped to take in wood.

These islands, ceded to Russia in 1810, form part of the district of Abo. Situate in the Gulf of Bothnia, their position is menacing towards the centre of Sweden, and, in case of war between it and Russia, could be made a rendezvous for a fleet, which would at all times be excessively dangerous to the former. Bomersund has been strongly fortified, and seems destined to play an important part in the events to which a few months must now give birth.

It was not until six o'clock in the morning that we were again under weigh. In the meantime the small cabin of the steamer presented an extraordinary appearance. About a dozen passengers were crowded together on the floor, each endeavouring to get possession of the softest plank whereon to pass the night; and a more seedy-looking set, as they emerged unwashed and unshaven in the morning from their common resting-place, could scarcely be imagined. A fresh breeze came on, and the decks piled up high with wood, caused the crazy boat to roll so much that she sometimes threatened to go over altogether; and we were not a little rejoiced when we entered the small bay, and thence the Aura, on which Abo, the ancient capital of Finland, is situated.

On our left the towers of the old castle looked respectable from their antiquity, but added little to the picturesque, for bricks and mortar with fallen

stucco, however large the building may be in which they exist, never convey to the mind an idea of grandeur, or any deep feeling of veneration. Yet this "château" has charms which are independent of its material or architecture. It has about it the hallowed memories of the past, and history connects it with many interesting events. Here Eric, the unworthy son of Gustavus Vasa, shut up his brother, and after committing a thousand acts of barbarity himself found a prison. It was regarded in the olden times as one of the fortresses of Finland; and more than once formed a barrier to the invasion of the Russians, while it often withstood the attacks of those political parties, who from time to time contended for power from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century.

The Aura is an insignificant stream: and Abo is about two miles from its mouth. Immediately on our touching the small pier, some quiet-looking custom-house officers came on board. Our passports, already in possession of the captain, were handed over to them, and we were surveyed in the order which our names occupied on his list; after which a strict examination of the luggage being made, we were permitted to land.

It appeared on inquiry that the steamer for Petersburg had left in the morning, and that the boat which had brought us was the property of the hotel-keeper; who had very wisely arranged, for his own benefit, that it should reach Abo as soon as

possible after the other had departed; and thus he managed every week to detain the greater number of the travellers who arrived by it, for several days at the "Society's House Hotel." The only consolation to us under this detention was, the establishment being tolerably clean and well conducted.

The morning after our arrival we were obliged to appear before the governor of the district, who furnished us with a provisional passport for Petersburg; but this required the *visé* of the police before it was of the slightest use, and for that certain fees were expected.

Abo is the oldest town of Finland, and the cradle of Christianity in that country; but few of the monuments of its flourishing period now remain. It has met with a series of misfortunes, which were brought to a climax by a terrible fire that ravaged it in 1827. Helsingfors had previously been constituted the capital; and it became the policy of Russia to remove the University to the same locality, and to crush the lingering attachment in the people to the birthplace of their faith, and the seat of their learning. All support was withdrawn from it; and commerce, which had previously flourished, soon began to wither, and had latterly become nearly extinct.

The old cathedral almost fell a victim to the all-devouring conflagration: the fire having entered it, destroyed the organ and other parts, and reduced

some of its marble monuments to lime. There stood the poor old Gothic edifice but partially repaired; while, as if to taunt the venerable pile with bitter mockery, a pert-looking Greek-Russian church close by, obtruded its paint, as an ill-mannered girl would flaunt her finery in the presence of a dame of gentler blood and purer taste, whose brow was whitened by the snows of age.

We entered this cathedral, and looked around with deep interest upon the monuments of a people, doomed soon to be absorbed and lost. Amongst them is one presenting a singular instance of romance in real life. It is a tablet to the memory of Catherine Morsson, the peasant's daughter, who, possessed of beauty but too attractive, was taken by Erick XIV. from a hovel, and placed amidst unusual splendour on a throne, again at the downfall of her cruel husband to descend to poverty and die in misery. In the vaults beneath were buried the noblest and the wisest of Finland's children. We saw their bodies in a singular state of preservation, torn from the coffins, and scattered about pell-mell. The most celebrated were placed in conspicuous situations, to be displayed to strangers. Amongst them was one of a philosopher: the size and form of the skull at once indicated the man to have possessed a large brain and unusual intellect. "Step down and see how the professor looks," said our guide, in a jocose and flippant manner. "O

tempora! O mores!" Here were the remains of one, who, perhaps in his day, exercised a powerful influence on all around him; who may have been beloved by his countrymen in life, and lamented in death; now become the subject of a jest; the object of a passing sneer from a vulgar mind.

The observatory stands on a hill, but is no longer used for its original purpose. A fine view is obtained from its roof, over the town and country; the latter consisting of dreary-looking rocks, and granite boulders, interspersed with small valleys, miserably cultivated, and badly fenced, which rather added to, than diminished, its wild and inhospitable appearance.

The modern town of Abo has immensely wide streets, and the houses, nearly all of wood, are detached; so that the extent of ground occupied is enormous, in comparison to the number of inhabitants. This arrangement is very good in case of fire; but in other respects has many inconveniences, and throws a melancholy air over the place, which looks quite deserted. Here are some cotton manufactories on a limited scale. We attended the small well-fitted theatre, witnessed good acting by native players, and heard Kellermann, then on his way to St. Petersburg, execute some exquisite pieces on the violoncello.

After five days' sojourn, when we had not only exhausted the few objects to be seen in the town, but driven on every available road in the neighbourhood,

we found ourselves on board the good steamer "Storfursten," bound to Helsingfors, Revel, and Petersburg. A heavy fog hung over the Aura at the time of our embarkation, and our departure was delayed two hours on that account; but once away, we were soon again in the midst of similar scenery to that on the coast of Sweden; consisting of innumerable islands and rocks of granite, wooded or bare, resembling each other, but never monotonous, and often highly picturesque. The channels being at times exceedingly narrow, and the navigation intricate and difficult. Towards the evening the scene was enlivened by the appearance of numerous small craft, wafted slowly along, with every sail set, before the light fair wind.

At length the dome of the Russian church at Helsingfors came into view; and shortly afterwards we passed close to the guns of the great fortress of Sweaborg, which, by the bright twilight, looked mysteriously severe and imposing. Although it was late before the vessel was moored, we determined to land and take a general view of the town.

Helsingfors was constituted the capital of Finland in 1819, and the seat of the University, after the destructive fire in Abo, whence that part of the library which had been saved was brought. The place, therefore, is quite new; the houses, built of brick, stuccoed, and coloured white, are good, and of Grecian architecture; the public buildings fine, and being in

wide streets and on open places, were shown off to the greatest advantage by the soft light we had chosen for their first inspection.

Daylight did not alter our favourable impressions; for although some imperfections were discovered which had been concealed the previous night, yet Helsingfors must be pronounced, on the whole, a handsome town; and seen from the harbour presented a charming, even a bewitching, aspect.

In the foreground were hundreds of market-boats, with a busy multitude on the shore, moving to and fro, a picture full of life and animation. Ranges of noble buildings lined the quays, above which rose other splendid edifices—the university, senate-house, courts of justice, observatory, and palace of the governor, displaying their painted iron roofs, of brown or green, yellow or red. Crowning, finishing, and adorning the whole, stands a beautiful Russian church, built upon a rock, with the columns in its portico of polished granite, supporting a pediment, on which are statues; while a large purple dome, spangled with golden stars, springs from the centre of this elevated temple.

If Russia has neglected and ill-used her stepchild, poor deserted Abo, she has not been sparing in her favours to the offspring of her own creation; and few towns in Europe of twenty thousand inhabitants can boast a more attractive appearance. But it is opposed, in every respect, to the simplicity of taste

which characterises the Fins. It recals none of their cherished traditions, but stands boldly forward, ever reminding them of the most sorrowful point in their history—the moment when their nation ceased to exist; when from children of freedom, they were changed to bondsmen and slaves.

Helsingfors is visited in the summer as a watering place by the wealthy Russian nobility; and an elegant bathing establishment is much frequented. It has always a large garrison; but the great majority of the troops are quartered at Sweaborg. Part of the Baltic fleet is moored here in the winter, at which season it is exceedingly gay.

The harbour is remarkably fine. Closed in on every side, and sheltered from all winds, it is capable of containing the largest fleets, protected towards the sea by the gigantic fortress of Sweaborg, of immense natural and artificial strength. Indeed, it conveyed to us the idea of being even stronger than Cronstadt, or Sevastopol, though not so showy and effective in appearance. Built upon seven islands of granite, many of its bastions and batteries are cut in the solid rock, and every available spot where they can be placed with advantage, bristles with cannons of the heaviest metal, and largest caliber. The principal entrance to the harbour is narrow, and as we passed out of it, we looked into the great yawning mouths of these huge guns, which appeared ready to vomit forth their deadly projectiles.

The reason will probably ever remain a mystery which induced the Swedish Admiral Cronstadt, in 1808 to hand this magnificent fortress over to the Russians, when he had a garrison of nearly eight thousand men, an immense supply of ammunition and provisions, and was moreover superior in numbers to his assailants. Such an act is totally unprecedented in history, and could only be accounted for by supposing that Russia had resorted to her usual system of offering an immense bribe, and had thus induced him to betray his country; or that he was the basest of all cowards. Yet neither of these reasons are supposed to have actuated him. A man of exalted courage, and presumed integrity, he had often before been tried and proved in the service of his country. He never returned to it, however, to give an explanation of his motives for so extraordinary and unjustifiable an act; but preferred remaining in the Russian dominions, where, a few years after, he died, it is said, of a broken and mortified spirit.

Whatever obscurity hangs over the *cause* of Admiral Cronstadt's having thus violated his trust, or deserted his post, the *effect* was fatal and melancholy for Finland. It blasted, by one rude and sudden blow, every fondly-clinging hope of the nation, and crushed the generous and noble aspirations of an ardent, intelligent, and enterprising people. We had some conversation with educated Fins, and never did we listen to more stirring words of burning

hatred, towards the oppressors of their country, who are doing everything they possibly can to blot out the memory of their dearest associations and traditions, by curtailing the national literature, and restricting education within the arbitrary limits permitted by a scrutinizing police.

When Finland fell under the Russian yoke in 1808, the Emperor Alexander, overjoyed at the possession of so valuable an addition to his empire, and perhaps feeling that he was dealing with a people who deserved to be treated in a more liberal and generous spirit than the craven slaves over whom he ruled in the full swing of despotism, hastened to confirm the Fins in many of their privileges. They were permitted to guard their constitution, to maintain the rights of the University, and to enjoy the fullest immunity in their religion and its worship; a spirit of conciliation being generally manifested towards them.

Nicholas has by no means followed out the policy of his brother. It is true he has not always openly attacked these privileges, but he has, nevertheless, applied insidiously at the root a slow but cankering poison, the effect of which is already displaying itself in withering blossoms and rotten fruit; and unless a change shall soon take place, the noble tree itself must die and fall.

The only possible excuse that Europe can offer for having thus allowed Finland to be snatched from

Sweden, to which it is united by affinity of race, by feeling, by institutions, and above all by religion, and to be absorbed into the Russian empire, is the fact of her having been at that time too much torn and distracted (by lengthened wars in her own centre), to enable her to act with unity and vigour in anything which called for interference at a distance.

The effects of this mistake are now showing themselves. Russia without Finland would be much more vulnerable from the Baltic than she is at present, and she never could have developed any resources as a naval power in the north, while Sweden in that respect would have remained her superior.

It may be asked, "What is the use of her Baltic fleet locked up in the harbour of Cronstadt?" The reply is, "That lying there, and it may be, rotting, it is worth fifty thousand men to her; for even in a passive state it is exercising considerable influence over Sweden, Denmark, and Prussia, but most especially over the two former. For they know full well, that if it still remain uninjured at the termination of the existing war, it might, and probably would, be brought against them afterwards on the first favourable opportunity, did they now take an active part in opposing a power as unscrupulous in its acts as it is false and dishonest in its policy."

But the "Storfursten" is off, and we are skimming over the waters of the Gulf of Finland, now sleeping

calmly and unruffled, reflecting the islands from its bosom as from the surface of a polished mirror.

Our passengers are a motley set. The tall Russian colonel marches about, with head thrown back and measured step, as though all around were made to serve his purpose. A little wizened-faced Jew crouches in a corner, and measures with piercing eye the capacity of each individual, and calculates the amount to which he could be *done*. Frenchmen and Italians, Germans and Norwegians, Fins and Esthonians, Englishmen and Danes, are jumbled together, a heterogeneous assemblage, with a Babel of tongues, in listening to which the time has flown rapidly by, and we have entered the harbour of Revel.

What magic touch has wrought this sudden change? 'Tis but a few short hours since we left a new and lively town, fresh with paint and glitter; a thing of yesterday, whose history could be summed up in one event. Now we look upon the sombre walls of times long passed by, which take us back to the sunny days of chivalry. Instead of broad, straight, and uniform streets, we find them narrow, winding, and irregular. The gable-fronted houses of the middle ages supersede the more formal lines of classic architecture. Dusky-coloured bricks take the place of lively-looking stucco; signs of age are everywhere visible, and, in some parts, indications of decay.

The appearance of Helsingfors at every step bears

upon its face the stamp of Russia, and the style of St. Petersburg. It shows at once that it was commenced, continued, and finished upon a fixed plan: while Revel was of slower growth, was subjected to many changes, and to a variety of masters. It has, indeed, an exciting history. Coveted by kings and powerful nobles, it became the prey of several in succession, and was at last given over to the Livonian knights of the Teutonic order. The remains of the castles which they occupied still exist, and would form, with many other buildings in Revel, very interesting objects of research, but unfortunately we were permitted to remain too short a time to do more than take a general view of the place, and visit a few churches, the principal of which, St. Nicholas, a fine old Gothic edifice, was undergoing a complete repair internally. The town is well fortified, and the harbour good. Placed at the end of the bay of Revel, it is defended by strong batteries towards the sea, and is the port of one division of the Russian Baltic fleet. The southern part of the bay is also commanded by a fort on Carlso Island, and a fortress on the eastern shore.

Soon after leaving Revel, we passed nine line-of-battle ships and several frigates, moored in line; and then the stupendous works of Cronstadt came in sight. Monster fortresses of gigantic size and great strength showed their terrible fronts. Forts Constan-

tine, Alexander, and Peter, were passed on the left, Risbank and Cronslott on the right; while the whole line of the merchants' and military harbours, with many smaller batteries, were mounted with heavy artillery. A thousand guns, admirably disposed for its defence, command the narrow shallow passage, on this the southern side of the island; and of these more than three hundred can be concentrated upon one spot, which every hostile ship must pass.

As we shall offer some remarks about Sevastopol and its fortifications, which we had a better opportunity of seeing and examining than those of Cronstadt, we shall here merely observe, that any opinions given as to attacking such works by sea, will more forcibly apply to the latter; for being built principally of granite, and under the Imperial eye, they are undoubtedly stronger than the former.

Cronstadt is, properly speaking, the port of Petersburg. In its harbour all foreign vessels receive and discharge their cargoes. There are the principal custom-house, and the large magazines for storing merchandize. It is also the greatest naval station of Russia, and contains the docks and basins for repairing men-of-war, but not the slips for building them. They are constructed at St. Petersburg, and floated down the Neva on great caissons called "camels."

Here we stopped, underwent an examination as to our passports, and were then transferred to a smaller steamer, which conveyed us up the Neva, the water of which is too shallow for vessels of a large size. On the southern shore of the bay of Cronstadt stands Peterhoff, the summer palace of the Emperor, of which we shall speak hereafter.

CHAPTER II.

Approach to Petersburg—Life on the Neva—The Custom-house—The Izac Church—The Kasan Church—The Winter Palace—A Plain Saloon and a "Boudoir"—The Hermitage—A Row to Yelagin—The Garden Islands—A Russian Fête—Peterhoff—Fête of the Empress.

WE now approach that wondrous city, which at the fiat of a mighty despot, rose up from the midst of pestilential swamps, where, scarce a hundred and fifty years ago, the solitary sea-bird alone found a home—where disease and death followed each man who placed his foot on the ungrateful soil. There the great Peter, on the bodies of a hundred thousand victim serfs, defying all natural obstacles, resolved to build his future capital; and, lo! as if at the command of a magician, stately palaces, gorgeous temples, and splendid buildings appeared; and Petersburg now rivals all, and surpasses most, of the older cities of Europe.

At many miles' distance, the lofty golden dome of the Izac Church may be seen, reflecting back the sun's rays in a ball of glowing yellow light; and on approaching nearer, other domes and spires, and cupolas and

minarets open to the view, varying in colour, and sparkling with gold and silver stars.

The day was lovely, the atmosphere bright, clear, and warm without being oppressive; and it was difficult to believe oneself in that region, which in early days had always been pictured as cold, dreary, and inhospitable.

As we swept over the smooth waters of the Neva, numberless boats and vessels passed us; some with high painted sterns, rowed by bearded men in pink or blue cotton shirts, belted at the waist, and hanging over, instead of being tucked into, their nether garments. Steamers full of sombre-looking individuals wended their way to the mercantile quarter of Cronstadt, or carried a light cargo of gaily-dressed ladies and gentlemen, bound on a voyage of pleasure to the inviting gardens of Peterhoff. Now dashed along an Imperial despatch-boat, whose only passengers were a few officers in uniform; and now floated by a ponderous barge, filled with the rich productions of distant climes.

Soon we shot, as it were, into the heart of the city; and then, indeed, it showed itself in all its glory. For a few minutes the anticipated struggle at the custom-house was forgotten, and we gave ourself up to the pleasure of contemplating the lines of imposing palaces and buildings stretching on either hand, above the noble granite quays. Elegant bridges spanned the wide Neva, now running on its silent

course, and giving no signs of that furious torrent, which, on the breaking up of the ice in the spring, threatens to carry everything before it; or which, when rolled back by the strong west wind, covers the fair city with its rushing waters, and makes the proud Emperor tremble lest the foundations of his noblest structures should have been sapped.*

A general scramble took place on landing. Each anxious countenance turned towards its owner's baggage, wondering what amount of wearing apparel would be looked upon as contraband, or which books might be seized, as containing sentiments inimical to the policy of the Russian Empire. Whether the officials with whom we had to deal were that day in a particularly amiable mood, or whether there was a strongly-marked anti-republican appearance about my friend and myself I know not; but certain it is, that after a slight glance at our open portmanteaus and leather bags, we were informed with smiles and bows that we might take our departure. Not a book was taken, not a coat disturbed; so that while all whom we met had tales of hardship to tell, of annoyances and exactions, we, wonderful to relate, without "bribery or corruption," passed

* In 1824 the Neva rose to such a height from this cause that immense damage was done. Four hundred and eighty-two houses were entirely destroyed, four hundred more or less damaged, vessels were launched into the middle of the streets, and all the bridges carried away excepting those of stone.

through the fiery ordeal of a Russian custom-house unscathed.

We had already despatched Moostrom (a Swedish servant engaged at Stockholm) to procure apartments; and having secured a "charette" for our traps, and a "droschky" for ourselves, we galloped off to our hotel. The quays were full of life and movement; vehicles of every description rattled along; "Isvoshtshiks" (droschky-drivers), with their low-crowned hats, and long blue coats, buttoned tightly around their throats, shouted and quarrelled over some unfortunate stranger, a stray look from whom had indicated a desire to drive, rather than walk to his destination.

St. Petersburg, being a town of yesterday, awakens none of those exciting emotions derived from wandering through the streets of the older cities of Europe, where the associations of history carry the mind back to past ages; where youth dreams of chivalry, and the antiquarian loves to linger near the crumbling walls of some monument of bygone days;—yet it has its interest, and the traveller may well pause and wonder, when his eye takes the range of those wide, long streets, and those immense squares, flanked by princely buildings, how they could have been raised from the bosom of a morass.

The most striking edifice is the Izac Church, on which a fabulous amount of money has been expended, the foundations alone having cost upwards of a million rubles. It was commenced by Alexander in 1819,

but its internal decorations were not finished at the period of our visit. Yet in spite of scaffolding, some idea could be formed of their gorgeous beauty. Immense attached columns, the shafts of malachite, and the bases and capitals of gold, rise from the ground to the roof. The dome and cupolas are painted in fresco by the most eminent artists, and everything precious or effective in decorative art has been applied, to render this temple worthy of the capital it adorns. Externally the effect is magnificent: four flights of massive granite steps lead to the principal entrances; one in each façade. The columns of the peristyles are of polished red granite, sixty feet high and seven feet in diameter, each shaft being of a single block, and having its capital in bronze. The dome is supported by twenty-four columns, also monoliths of polished granite, which can scarcely be less than thirty-five or forty feet in height, though their size can be hardly imagined until one ascends to the top of this superb cathedral. Around the central dome are four cupolas, the whole of copper gilt. We saw in the Taurida Palace an exquisite work in malachite, consisting of a circular canopy, supported by eight Corinthian columns twelve feet high, and intended to be placed in the centre of the Izac Church, immediately beneath the dome. There are about thirty other churches in Petersburg, nearly all of the Byzantine style.

The Kasan Church of the Virgin, an intended copy of St. Peter's at Rome, is externally a failure. Inter-

nally, however, there is a great profusion of gold, silver, and precious stones. All the pillars of the balustrade, the door-posts, and the picture-frames of the screen, which conceal the sanctuary, are of massive silver, cast from the offerings made to the holy mother of Kasan, by the Cossacks, after the campaigns of 1813 and 1814, the fruits of their robbery and pillage. Hung to the columns are keys of towns taken by the Russian army; and dispersed about are numerous flags and other trophies.

The Winter Palace which replaced that burnt to the ground in 1837, when all the accumulated treasures of several reigns were destroyed, rose like a phœnix from its ashes, within twelve months from the destruction of its predecessor. The Czar had willed, and the work was accomplished. It is an enormous quadrangle. We entered by the Ambassador's staircase, remarkable for its fine dark granite columns; traversed hall after hall, corridor, and gallery, fitted up in an extravagant and costly style.

The most beautiful amongst them is St. George's Hall, a vast apartment, at the end of which is placed the throne. A range of pure white marble Corinthian columns, supporting an entablature and balustrade of the same, extends the whole length of the walls, which are also of white marble. Here the Emperor, on state occasions, surrounded by his ministers, and a brilliant staff blazing with decorations, often bestowed

for imaginary victories gained, receives the foreign ambassadors, &c.

Alexander's room and one adjoining it are fine, and contain a number of historical pictures, principally of Russian battles. Another gallery is devoted to portraits of celebrated field-marshals; and a fourth to those of all the generals who served in the campaigns of 1812, 1813, and 1814, and amongst which stands out conspicuously that of our own "Duke."

In a plain saloon are four interesting pictures, of the Empress and her three lovely daughters. These as works of art are of a high order of merit, and were painted by Mrs. Robertson, an English lady. It is impossible to say what amount of flattery the talented *artiste* may have given to these portraits; but if they are faithful representations of the Grand Duchesses, then indeed might the Emperor have been proud of the originals.

Within the palace are two chapels; one strictly private, and the other public. They rival each other in the gorgeousness of their embellishments, but their principal charms are some good pictures.

The jewel-room (before the door of which a constant guard is kept) contains the regalia and all the crown jewels. In the sceptre was the largest diamond in Europe, until the arrival of the Koh-i-noor in England. These treasures amounted in value to many millions sterling.

The boudoir of the Empress, of malachite and

gold, may be pronounced the gem of the palace; the soft green of the former, harmonizing with and relieving the brilliancy of the latter, produce in their combination a most charming effect.

We must not pass over in silence the suite of apartments occupied by the Grand Duke (the "Czarevitch"), their neat and unostentatious appearance formed an agreeable contrast to those we have noticed above.

We owe, perhaps, some apology to our readers for giving any description, however short, of this palace, since other travellers, and better writers have already offered the result of their observations to the world. But as, for a great part of the year, it is the home of that man who rules over an empire equal to a seventh part of the habitable globe, and more than sixty millions of human beings—of whom one-third regard him as a demigod; as it is within those walls that the secret plans for subjugating Europe have for years been concocting, which, if accomplished, would retard the progress of civilization, and check the expansion of that intellect, which, nursed for forty years in the bosom of peace, has now taken such a mighty development,—our imperfect notice may not have proved wholly uninteresting.

The Hermitage built by Catherine the Great is also a large palace, though bearing a name which would indicate a more modest and retiring edifice. Here it was that that extraordinary woman loved to

surround herself by all men celebrated for their learning, for their heroic deeds, or their undying works of art; and where, abandoning the cold formalities of stately etiquette, she gave herself up to the pleasure of conversation, in which calm philosophy, sparkling wit, and brilliant genius mingling together, threw over these réunions a bright halo, which those who took part in them have perpetuated in their records.

The Hermitage now forms a vast museum, in which is a large collection of pictures by good masters of every school; many fine specimens of ancient and modern sculptures; some exquisite mosaics, which, from their excellence, resemble the choicest paintings in water-colour; vases of jasper, porcelain, crystal, and malachite, of great size and beauty; and an accumulation of riches in the shape of precious stones and objects of virtù, which throw the green vaults of Dresden completely into the shade, and would suggest the idea that some former monarch of Russia must have been the veritable Aladdin, who had taken full advantage of the powers of his wonderful lamp.

But let us fly from the glitter of palaces, where the mind becomes fatigued in contemplating the stored-up wealth of generations, and take refuge amidst scenes of another description. It is a *fête* day, and the population of Petersburg is pouring in living streams along the banks, or gliding over the broad Neva in row-boats, towards "The Garden Islands,"

which, like those whereon the city stands, were rescued from an unhealthy swamp, to form the retreat of the wealthy and the resort of pleasure's votaries. The "Garden Islands" are five in number, on one of which (Yelagin) is an Imperial chateau. The others are dotted over with fantastic villas, of Chinese, Gothic, or Italian styles.

To Yelagin, as the centre of attraction, we made our way in a frail boat, rowed by Cossacks from the banks of the Don. It was a balmy evening, and the setting sun was already throwing the long shadows of the trees over the water, not however as a prelude to darkness, for here, in summer, soft twilight (usurping the throne of inky night) sheds its pale light around, and gives a dreamy mystery to objects which in the broad glare of the midday sun possess neither interest nor beauty.

As we approached our destination, a low murmur of ten thousand voices, or the strains of music, mellowed by distance, came wafted on the breeze. At length amidst a crowd of boats, we reached the land, and mingled with the joyous multitude. Who, while gazing around, would have thought that he looked partly but on a throng of serfs?—that their lives and property were in the hands of one man, who might at any time deprive them of either, or both! Yet so it was; and no one born in other and freer lands could have left that scene without feeling that the slave who has known no higher state, may dance merrily

to the jingling of his fetters, or pass through life without feeling the weight of his chains.

The island is laid out in walks and drives, along which, on foot or in carriages, from the street droschky to the magnificent equipage of the noble, promenaded thousands of people. Here and there small circles of soldiers, with the "*Zapevala,*" or leader, in the centre, sang their wild but harmonious national songs. Some of these were highly amusing. The *Zapevala* addressed the group in singing threats or questions, entreaties or arguments, according to the nature of the song, accompanying his voice with grimaces, leapings, and dancing, and an occasional blow on a small tambourine, performing these movements with an accuracy of time quite astonishing; some in the circle replying, or the whole joining in chorus with extreme vivacity and no ordinary talent.

Punch, with his ever-attractive nonsense, conjurors, and jugglers, drew admirers around them; while a hundred tents and booths were cramned full of good folks, sucking their tea, flavoured with a slice of lemon, through lumps of sugar previously deposited in their mouths; a characteristic method of imbibing the decoction of souchong, peculiar to the Muscovite.

As ten o'clock approached a general movement was observed towards the water's edge; for on an opposite island fireworks were to be let off. By good luck we found our boat, and with difficulty obtained

a favourable position for seeing the display of pyrotechnical art. Chinese lamps of varied colours hung in festoons on steamers and barges moored for the purpose. After pushing or struggling, bawling or pulling, scolding or laughing, each endeavouring to get the best place, the boats were at last jammed into a compact immoveable mass. All noise was now hushed, for a signal rocket flashing through the air was followed by sparkling fountains of fire, and scintillating stars; and then by the bombardment of a castle with thousands of rockets and fire-balls; a wind-up flattering to the military taste of the "braves Russes." On our return to Petersburg we found the streets illuminated by pans of fat with large wicks in the centre, placed along the edges of the foot pavements.

On the morning of the 15th we took steamer for Peterhoff, the St. Cloud of St. Petersburg. The palace, about which there is nothing remarkable, is situated on an eminence; the sloping bank of which has been arranged with water-works, considered by many people to be as fine as those of Versailles.

This being the second day's fête of the Empress (of which the one at the islands was the first), we saw these fountains in full play; and the effect was very beautiful. There are an immense number of "jets d'eaux," issuing from the mouths of dolphins, frogs, &c., or pouring out of vases held by nymphs. The

principal jet gushes from the mouth of a lion, stretched open by a colossal Samson in bronze, eighty feet in height.

The gardens and grounds are neatly laid out; and a small river and lake made the most of. The stream is about three miles long, planted on each bank with trees. Here an effective illumination took place in the evening. The trees were filled with Chinese lanterns. The borders of the stream, the margins of the lake, and the islands on it, were lighted up; and the outlines of some castellated houses traced with coloured lamps.

At about ten o'clock a procession of carriages moved gently along the avenue: the first, a "char-à-banc," contained the Emperor and Empress, some of the Imperial family, and royal visitors. The rest, about thirty in number, were filled with ladies, and gentlemen of the court in brilliant uniforms. The fête closed with fireworks, arranged with elegance and taste.

CHAPTER III.

The Citadel and Church of St. Peter and St. Paul—Foundling Hospital—The Arsenal—"Corps des Mines"—The Streets—The Summer Garden—A Scotch Physician—Adieu to the Queen of the Neva—Making a Road—Novgorod the Great—Roadside Villages—The Costume of the Peasants—Personal Appearance of the Peasantry—Travelling Carriages.

On the right bank of the Neva opposite the Winter Palace, may be seen a thin bright golden spire, three hundred and forty feet in height, shooting its graceful form from the midst of bastions, and a hundred bristling cannons. This is the citadel; and that spire adorns the church of St. Peter and St. Paul, enclosed within its walls. This church forms a mausoleum for the remains of the Czars and Imperial family, from Peter the Great to Alexander.

The coffins placed in the vaults are plain and unostentatious. Simple sarcophagi of stone, covered with palls, but slightly ornamented, are the only memorials of the departed great, and offer a striking contrast to the splendour and luxury with which the living monarchs delight in surrounding themselves.

Military trophies decorate the church. Flags of Turkey, Sweden, Poland, and France; field-marshals'

batons; keys of captured towns; Prussian eagles and Pasha's tails, with silent eloquence, lead back the memory to deeds of blood.

Like the Tower of London, the citadel of St. Petersburg forms the prison of political offenders; and it is said, that few who were formerly consigned to its wretched dungeons, ever again saw the light. Surrounded by a deep moat, and armed with heavy guns, it is a fortress of some strength, but from its position, could be of little service in defending the city if attacked by a hostile army.

The Foundling Hospital is one of those gigantic buildings everywhere conspicuous in Petersburg. Within its walls live seven thousand human beings, and thirty thousand are supported from its revenues. About six hundred infants, under six weeks of age, were in rows of cradles, ticketed and numbered in the spacious well-kept wards. The day of our visit, eight of those little creatures had arrived before 11 o'clock in the morning. After six weeks the children are sent to the country, and are very often nursed and brought up by their own mothers, who apply for, and readily obtain, this privilege. At six years of age the girls are taken back to the institution for education; while the boys are sent to a branch establishment. Several thousand girls are, therefore, at all times, receiving a liberal education; on the termination of which, they are placed as servants, nursemaids, or governesses, according to their abilities.

One department is devoted to the orphans of the higher class, who are taught several languages, music, &c. The revenues of this immense establishment are more than a million sterling. We were indebted to the politeness of the director, who kindly took us over it, for the above information.

In a small room were four beautiful children under nine years. "This," said our conductor, "is a very interesting group. Until yesterday these children were in the enjoyment of the greatest luxury; they had servants, carriages, and everything which wealth could command; to-day they go to the country and will be brought up as peasants; and the saddest part is, that the boy and eldest girl are quite aware of the change about to take place in their position. When they parted from their mother, who brought them here, the scene was heart-rending; their agony was more powerful and expressive than I ever before witnessed in children so young." Their history was short. They were illegitimate: their father, a nobleman of high rank, had died suddenly, leaving them pennyless, and his widow (for he was married), refused to grant any funds for their support.

As all things connected with military matters in Russia are at this moment unusually interesting, a glance at the Arsenals may not be out of place. Of these there are two in Petersburg; the old and the new. The buildings of the latter, devoted to the casting and finishing of cannon, are really magni-

ficent. The steam-machinery (of English make) is on the most approved principles, and nothing has been neglected to render the establishment efficient. The carriage department is on an equally grand scale. From these huge workships and dépôts, the artillery both for the navy and army is supplied; and immense stores of guns and other arms are at all times ready to be sent wherever they are required.

The Museums attached to these Arsenals, while they contain a thousand trophies taken in battle, similar to those seen in nearly all the churches of St. Petersburg, also display a history of the dress of the Russian army, in a collection of the armour, uniform, and weapons, arranged according to their dates, from an early period to the present time.

Models, on a large scale, of all the fortified towns which have fallen into the hands of Russia, are also deposited here; amongst them those of Turkey, by their numbers and importance, are most conspicuous. The fall of many of those towns, brought about by treachery, falsehood, and intrigues of the foulest kind, reflect but little honour on the Russian name, and tarnish the lustre of her glories gained in other fields.

One of the finest and best-arranged collections of minerals in the world is to be found in the Museum of the "Corps des Mines." The specimens of copper, lead, and iron ores are remarkably fine. A lump of virgin gold, eighty pounds in weight; a block of

malachite of nearly four tons; and innumerable precious stones in their native state, give evidence of the wealth of the Ural range of mountains; the resources of which, when fully developed, must exercise great influence over the future destiny of the country.

If the number of men already sacrificed in the present war, and those likely yet to become victims, had been occupied in gathering the riches which Nature has showered on this favoured country, what comfort and happiness might have been extended to thousands now plunged into misery and despair!

The praises bestowed on the collection of Mineralogy cannot be extended to that of Natural History, which, neither in its arrangement, nor the number of specimens, calls forth any particular interest; the skeleton of a gigantic Mammoth, found in Siberia at the commencement of this century, in whose snows the body (quite fresh when discovered) had been preserved through many ages, being, however, an exception.

The stranger finds a fund of amusement in wandering through the streets and bazaars of St. Petersburg. The sturdy *Butshnick* (street guardian), with his halbert and long grey coat, faced with red, seems to be standing night and day on the same spot; unless some unlooked-for occurrence sets his organs of locomotion in action; military officers of every rank galloping along; Don Cossack and Kal-

muck, Circassian and Polish soldiers in their various uniforms; dashing carriages and four, with the traces so long that the leaders may be lost sight of on turning a corner; droschkies, with seats like a prolonged saddle on wheels, where the passengers are perched one behind the other, as we sometimes see boys on the back of a donkey, add life to the scene; while, if the observer have a taste for the pictorial, he has only to study the painted signs of the shops, where various hieroglyphics, as the simplest form of written language for the comprehension of the Russian serf, supply the place of the formal characters, wherewith a London tradesman is accustomed to notify his business or calling.

Go to the Summer Gardens, the Elysium of nurses and nursery-maids; and there, as in the Tuileries gardens of Paris, you will see numerous varieties of the genus "homo" in an incipient state of development. Small boys, dressed *à la Moujik*, or in Cossack or Circassian costumes, romp about and call to their companions in half a dozen languages condensed into one sentence; or little girls, got up *à la Parisienne*, flit from one point to another, like butterflies on a sunny day. Here indifferent statues intrude themselves upon your gaze; and there, nestling amidst trees in a distant corner, is the modest little house of Peter the Great.

A visit to the monastery of Alexander Nevsky; a trip by rail to the magnificent palace of Czarsco Selo,

its gardens and museum; a drive to the camp of Krasno Selo, with a review of sixty thousand men, and exploring other palaces and gardens; exhausted, not only the lions of Petersburg, but the time that we had decided on giving up to them. So we took a last look at the colossal equestrian statue of Peter the Great, having a granite rock for its pedestal; and the fine column on the Admiralty Square, erected in honour of Alexander; and then made our preparations for departure to Moscow.

During our sojourn in Petersburg, we had no experience of Russian inns, having had all the comforts of home at the Miss Bensons' hotel on the English Quay; and we feel sure that every traveller who has put up at their house, will bear testimony with us to the admirable way in which it was conducted.

On several occasions we enjoyed the hospitality of a remarkable man, since dead. Sir James Wylie was physician to the Emperor Paul; was one of the first persons called to the spot on the assassination of that monarch; he accompanied Alexander in all his campaigns, and was with him at his death. Few men in Europe had passed, as an actor, through so many of those exciting scenes which marked the end of the last and the beginning of the present century. He had a profusion of orders, having been decorated by nearly all the sovereigns of Europe.

A day or two after reaching St. Petersburg, we ex-

changed the provisional passport obtained at Abo, for another. This entailed a visit to thea uthorities, who put a variety of questions; demanding whether we had visited Russia before? what our object was in doing so? whether we had letters of introduction, and to whom? These questions, and especially the latter, being satisfactorily answered, we left the rest to a "valet de place," and were, as far as we knew, duly advertised three times in the "Petersburg Gazette," a precaution which would have effectually marred any plans for bolting without paying our tailors' bills, had such been our intention.

As it would have been ignominious to leave without gaining the experience of a Russian bath, I encountered its alternate steaming, freezing, and friction, but should scarcely recommend the process to tourists, who may pay a visit in future to the North; supposing an Englishman should ever again be able to show his nose in the Russian dominions.

On the 25th we bade adieu to that city which has been well designated the Queen of the Neva, as fair Venice is called the Queen of the Adriatic; but not with the same regret as we should have left the latter. We had seen everything, and there was nothing more to long for; a new city without the associations of the past, calls up none of those stirring, burning thoughts, attached to every stone of the Doge's palace, or the spanning arch of the Rialto. No! Petersburg, as compared to Venice, is a body

without a soul. Besides, who that had once swept in the luxurious gondola, over the moonlit waters of the Adriatic; listening to the swelling notes of melodious music, or sat on the Place St. Mark, when the setting sun tinged with ruddy hue the dome and cupolas of its beautiful church—who would not desire to return to them once again? Yet no such longing exists in me with regard to St. Petersburg.

But we are off to Moscow, where other charms await us. Armed with a basket of provisions and sundry bottles of Bordeaux, we took our seats in a diligence, which for comfort and convenience would bear a favourable comparison with the same description of vehicle in any other country of Europe; the macadamized road being excellent, and the pace tolerably good.

When Peter the Great built his new capital, he ordered a straight road to be made between it and Moscow: but for once the iron will was foiled; for hungry morasses swallowed up everything brought to them, and no foundation could be obtained. Nicholas, imitating his predecessor, gave the same order with respect to the railroad, and though through the engineering skill of the present day, (which acknowledges nothing as impossible,) the work has been accomplished, it was only by an immense expenditure of money. An American, who wished to impress upon me the magnitude of the work, said jokingly, "that the number of piles driven was so great, that if sought

for, some of them would most probably be found at the antipodes." Perhaps it is to ascertain whether such is the fact, that Admiral Paniutine is now on a voyage of discovery in the Pacific Ocean; and it is just possible that he may return to inform his Imperial master, that he is as unlikely to transfix the world by accident, as he is to subdue it by design.

The first town of importance we passed through was Novgorod. Built about the fifth century, it became the centre of a flourishing and powerful republic, which gave rise to a popular Russian proverb, "Who would dare attack God and Novgorod the Great?" But its sun has set; its glory has departed; its streets are deserted; its houses in ruin; the domes of its temples shine no more with gold; their green and purple have faded; their stars are dim: but they still proudly bear that cross which was never replaced by the crescent, for unlike all the older towns of Russia, Novgorod withstood those Tartar hordes, who for centuries devastated the country. Of four hundred thousand inhabitants, which in its palmy days it was said to have contained, but seven thousand now remain. They have fled, and are flying, to a younger and richer rival; deserting the home of their fathers for the proud daughter of the Neva.*

The road, until reaching the hilly district of Valdai,

* Novgorod, the ancient republic, which is not far from St. Petersburg, must be distinguished from other towns in Russia bearing the same name.

about mid-distance between Petersburg and Moscow, is uninteresting and even monotonous, but there it becomes picturesque though not strikingly so.

Tarjoc is rather a large town, and is celebrated for the embroidering of leather, an art learnt from the Tartars, and brought to great perfection in this place.

The town of Tver, situated on the Volga, has some wide, clean-looking streets, and the hotel appeared somewhat better than the generality of those on the road. An English gentleman connected with one of the steam companies, having surveyed the river between this place and Nijni Novgorod, found that it was not navigable for steam vessels. The Volga at Tver is about half the width of the Thames, and in its tortuous course runs more than two thousand five hundred miles before it reaches the Caspian.

The numerous villages on the great road from Petersburg to Moscow resemble each other; they are usually composed of a single street, the cottages being detached or semi-detached. These are built of wood, having the entrance at the side, while the gable end fronts the street; and here it is that the *plotnic* (carpenter) displays his skill. With tools of the simplest and roughest kind, he produces light and elegant wood cuttings with which the cottages are ornamented, and which are often quite works of art. The principal apartment looks on the street, and generally has three windows: above this, immediately beneath the roof, there is often a room called the

terema, used as the sleeping-chamber of the young girls, and having a window with a balcony, also looking on the street. Some of the better houses have the fronts and roofs painted, others have the shutters only, which are usually red; but the great majority are without paint in any part. The Swiss "châlet" is very like the house of the Russian peasant, but the one, in character with the surrounding scenery, is picturesque, in the extreme, while the effect of the other is entirely lost.

Most of the peasants were clothed in sheep-skin coats, with the "skinny side out and the woolly side in;" and which, as the weather was exceedingly warm, we must conclude they "found pleasant and cool;" others wore cotton shirts, pink or blue, hanging over loose trousers, tucked into Wellington boots. Advanced a little in worldly wealth, the sheep-skin is superseded by a *caftan* of grey, or dark-blue cloth, confined to the body by a bright-coloured sash.

The women wear coloured handkerchiefs on the head, tied beneath the chin, loose cotton gowns supported by straps over the shoulders, and confined by a band passing immediately beneath the armpits across the upper part of the chest, which, pressing the breast, produces an unnatural and disagreeable effect. In the winter a short coat of sheep-skin called *douché-greika* (soul warmer) is worn over the gown. According to the circumstances of the individual, the cotton

robe may be changed for linen or silk, the sheep-skin coat to a "polka" of another material, and the head-dress may become more ornamental.*

The people are very fair; the men well-looking, upright, with good muscular development. They are capable of great endurance, bearing extreme heat or cold, and sudden changes from one to the other without suffering. They know of no such luxury as a bed, and we frequently saw numbers of wayfarers in the villages in the early morning, sound asleep at the sides of the streets, whose only resting-places for the night had been the cold earth where they lay, whose only canopy the broad expanse of heaven.

The women are decidedly plain, and one is puzzled, when-looking on the two sexes, to know how such good-looking sons could be the progeny of such ugly mothers.

Very few houses of nobles are to be seen along this route. The country, excepting at the Valdai hills is flat; the land rudely cultivated, and only in patches,

* The head-dress of the women of Tarjoc and Tver merit the attention of the traveller. In the other parts of Russia, the "coiffure" is composed of a velvet or silk cap embroidered with gold or pearls, enclosing the face, and forming around the head a graceful circle (Kakoschnic). This "coiffure" is part of the court dress, and is marvellously becoming; and the Empress herself is often represented in it. In place of this beautiful head-dress, the females of Tarjoc and Tver wear a raised conical cap, which, the point falling in front, one can compare only to a shoe.—*Haxthausen.*

while thousands of acres of good ground lie neglected.

We passed great numbers of carts on the road, laden with cotton for the factories of the interior: cotton manufactures are highly protected in Russia, and are therefore very dear.

The travelling carriage of the Russian noble is large and cumbrous, and when on a long journey contains together with the family, bed, bedding, provisions, and all other necessaries. We observed in these, on more than one occasion, elegant women beguiling the monotony of the road by smoking cigarettes.

The toll-bars and government-stations are gaily painted, the gardens neatly kept and prettily laid out, and with their bright flowers form a contrast to all around them. In the district of Novgorod we passed through some of those military colonies, from which a certain supply of soldiers can always be called out on an emergency, and which form a curious and interesting feature in Russian military policy.*

* I must refer my readers to the valuable work of the Baron Haxhausen for a description of these colonies.

CHAPTER IV.

Arrive at Moscow—Towns interesting from different causes—A view over Moscow—Moscow the idol of the Russians—The "Spass Vorota"—A Saint's Fête—The Gostinnoi Dvor—Ninime and Pajarski—The Maidens' Convent—The Nuns not beautiful—The Kremlin—Russian Superstition.

On the 28th, after seventy-two hours of travelling, we entered Moscow by a triumphal arch, surmounted by Victory in a car, with eight prancing steeds. Through the busy streets, teeming with life and activity, we made our way to the Hotel de France, which, kept by a Frenchman, was pretty comfortable, and the "cuisine" good. But, after two days, we changed to Mrs. Howard's boarding-house, where we could obtain no accommodation on our arrival. Our first care was to find a travelling-servant, having dismissed the Swede at Petersburg, because he was ignorant of the Russian language. This being accomplished, we were left to enjoy the pleasures of exploring Moscow.

I have wandered through the narrow, filthy streets of Constantinople, stumbling over mangey dogs, and

breathing a vile pestilential atmosphere, diluted, but not improved, by the odour of tobacco; wondering why poets had sung and authors raved of such a place. But when I mounted to the summit of Galata's Tower, and gazed in rapture upon the Golden Horn, the Bosphorus, and Marmora, and saw Stamboul, upon her seven hills, rising in majesty from the midst of their waters—I looked upon islands near, and on distant classic mountains; then I knew why poets sang and authors raved.

I have stood upon the citadel of Cairo, and saw a monotonous sea of roofs, from which no varied colours reflected back the light; relieved only by the graceful minarets, which pierce the sky. I descended to the streets, and found at every turn views so picturesque, of overhanging houses, with fronts of quaint lattice-work, one half of which thrown into shade by a many-coloured awning floating between opposite roofs, the other illumined by that pure refulgent light peculiar to the clime; and mosques with chequered walls; and white, black, and green-turbaned bearded men; and wild Arabs, on their swift desert steeds, and black eunuchs leading mules, carrying that which two sparkling eyes alone proclaimed to be some living beauty; and pilgrim fanatics from Mecca's shrine; all these things I saw, and many more, and *then* I found wherein lay Orient Cairo's charms.

I have walked the silent "Via Dolorosa" of Jeru-

salem, ascended to the roof of Pontius Pilate's house,* looked down upon that spot where once stood Solomon's glorious temple, the destruction of which the sons and daughters of Israel have wept over for eighteen hundred years; and I looked on Golgotha and the dome which conceals the sepulchre of the Saviour,† and the valley of Jehoshaphat with its tombs of holy men, and then I sought the sacred Mount of Olives, and the distant Moab hills, which border that sea, where no living thing is found. Why did tumultuous thoughts rush crowding on my heart? There was nothing in that scene so lovely as a thousand I had viewed before; and excepting only on Mount Olive's verdant slope, desolation, frightful desolation, reigned around.—No! no! it was association's power alone which could arouse those deep emotions.

But I wander:—Back! back! to Moscow, gentle reader, and there from the Kremlin, ascend with me the tall belfry of Ivan Valiki. Then you will find wherein consists the beauty of Moscow; it is not in an unrivalled position, nor in picturesque streets,

* The Pasha resides at present in a house which tradition points out as that occupied by Pontius Pilate.

† Mr. Fergusson argues, in his 'Topography of Ancient Jerusalem,' that the true sepulchre is beneath the "Dome of the Rock" (the Mosque of Omar), and to me his reasons are convincing.

nor in sacred associations. Look forth upon the thousand gold and silver, green and purple star-bespangled domes and towers, cupolas, and spires.* Behold how the sun comes back, in a flood of light, from the golden roofs of palaces. Look over that sea of green house-tops, relieved here or there by a red or brown, a purple or black roof. See those churches and convents; those palaces and monasteries, of every form, size, and colour; how they stand forth, now in solitary grandeur, now nestling together, now modest or retiring, now bold or majestic, now grotesque. or bizarre; and then the Moskva's stream, twisting and turning like a thing of light and life; caressing with its moving waters, in succession, the foundations of "cloud-capped towers," of "sumptuous palaces," of the serf's cabin, or the stall of the outcast Jew.

Moscow is to the Russian what Mecca is to the pious Moslem. He calls it by the endearing terms of "Mother of Russia," "Holy Town," "City of White Walls." Every true Russian hopes once in his life to see this idol of his imagination—this object of his superstitious veneration. Thus it happens that people from the most distant and opposite parts of the

* Authors differ widely as to the number of religious edifices in Moscow; some speak of more than 1500, others of 260; but allowing even the latter to be correct, there cannot be less than a thousand cupolas, domes, &c., and there are probably many more.

empire, are constantly to be seen at this favourite centre of attraction; and it results that its population is varied and interesting.

Perhaps the most striking thing to the traveller is the outward demonstration of this veneration. In strolling along he sees at every step the hat raised when passing before a church, or one of the numerous open chapels containing the picture of a saint; and in driving, he may sometimes feel in tribulation for his neck, when he finds his "Isvostchik" at each moment going through the same ceremony.

No person, from the meanest peasant to the proud Czar himself, ever enters the "Spass Vorota" (gate of the Redeemer) of the Kremlin, with the head covered. The sharp voice of the sentinel, placed for the purpose, soon warns the unwary stranger who has neglected this duty by the cry of "Shläpa, Shläpa," (hat, hat). Such a warning we drew forth, as in unblissful ignorance we overstepped the hallowed boundary.

The peculiar bow in the religious ceremonies, has become the fixed and characteristic habit of the lower orders; so that one is asked for alms or greeted in respect, with as much reverence of manner as is bestowed on the image of one of the most venerated saints of the Russian-Greek kalendar.

The streets, unlike St. Petersburg, are irregular, and those containing shops, display an immense variety of painted signs, which indicate the occu-

pations or trade of the residents. Many of these are on a large scale, and have some pretension to artistic talent. To the ignorant serf they are all-important: to the observant stranger most amusing.

A "fête" in the Russian Church occurring about every third day, it was not surprising that some should have happened during our sojourn in Moscow; but these fêtes, though sufficient at all times to deprive the visitor of amusement, by effectually closing public buildings, &c., seldom offer a compensation.

On the first of August, however, being the fête of an important saint, we sallied forth to see the procession. Issuing from the Kremlin came first a body of choristers, two and two, chanting in deep solemn tones. Then followed those objects of profound adoration, the pictures of saints, some sixty or seventy in number; each raised on a pole, and having, besides the bearer, two other attendants. Then came a string of popes (priests), with their long beards and flowing robes; then a huge lamp borne before the shrine of the saint, followed by the archbishop clothed in a robe worth a prince's ransom. An eager crowd blocked every spot near which this procession passed; from the midst of which, with uncovered heads, and pious crossings, were muttered unintelligible prayers.

Moscow is supplied with water from an immense reservoir, into which it is pumped by an always-going, never-tiring steam-engine. Conducted by pipes to fountains in different parts of the town, it is distributed

by carts, the filling of which is curious to notice. The carrier stands on the basin of the fountain, into which he dips a bucket fixed to the end of a pole, and dexterously whirling it over his head, throws the contents with unerring aim, and without losing a drop, into a small hole at the top of a barrel, some six feet distant from the point at which the stream quits the bucket.

Connected with life in the streets of Moscow the *gostinnoi-dvor* (bazaar) on the "Kitai-gorod" must not be omitted. Hours may be spent lounging in its numerous passages, and examining the productions of the wide world; listening to the exhortations to buy, addressed to you by embryo merchants from six to ten years of age, whom you stumble over at every step; but who, like the mongrel dogs of Constantinople, never break their fixed boundary; not that the stranger is in the least benefited by this, for it only leads to his being assailed with fresh vigour, and he finds that he has escaped from the frying-pan to get into the fire.

In the *gostinnoi-dvor* the influence of superstition is brought into action as it is everywhere in Russia; and well would it be if its effects on the *morals* were as deep as its external manifestations are evident in the *manners* of the people. At every corner hangs the familiar picture of a saint with a little dull lamp burning before it; and there, while reverently crossing himself in memory of the crucifixion of his Saviour, the shopkeeper endeavours by every species of false-

hood and trickery to cheat his victim. There can be little doubt but the pickpocket in the act of relieving you of your watch with one hand, would make a similar demonstration of religious feeling with the other, were the image of a holy saint at that instant to meet his eye.

What a field for the study of physiognomy would Lavater have found in the Ryädi of the *gostinnoi-dvor* of Moscow, where representatives of the infinite variety of races embraced within the outstretched arms of this colossal empire, are to be seen on every side!

On the *Krasnoi* (red) square, between the bazaar and the Kremlin, is a monument in bronze, erected by Alexander to the memory of the citizen patriot Ninime, and the General Pajarski, by the combined exertions of whom the Poles were expelled from Moscow in 1610; the former furnishing the funds, and the latter the forces. As a work of art this monument is not a triumphant specimen; and the two statues in their classic attire, look almost as ridiculous as our dear old Duke with his apologies for pantaloons opposite the Royal Exchange of London.

I shall not enter on a full description of the numberless churches and monasteries of Moscow; yet a word or two may be said concerning a nunnery, for ladies and romantic young gentlemen always like to hear about nuns But we warn the latter, that we have nothing to say of cloistered beauties, shut

up by granite-hearted fathers, who drop down small billets-doux, attached to darning-cotton, from the barred windows of their prisons, to young heroes with incipient moustaches, who wait below, with burning hands, and bursting hearts to receive them.

On a lovely evening we drove to the "Devitshei Monastir," (Maidens' Convent) in the suburbs of Moscow. The service had commenced when we entered the church. The door of the massive screen was thrown open, and through this could be seen the dimly-lighted altar. The low chant of the sisters swelled beneath the lofty vaults. Ranged right and left were the nuns in black costumes, consisting of a dress made close to the throat, with long sleeves and short train sweeping the ground; in addition to which, some had capes, falling about midway between the shoulders and waist. The head-dress consisted of a black velvet cap, exactly the shape of a sugar-loaf, the back part being longer than the front, so as to cover the ears: attached to this again, was a plaited piece of black silk, about a foot long, which fell over the back. Some of the elder nuns had black net hanging over this silk, and descending almost to the ground.

Nearly the whole service, which continued for two hours, was performed by nuns, who read the long prayers, and rattled over them at a great pace too,—several of them, young and old, taking turns. The duties of the only two officiating priests seemed con-

fined to the ceremonial part, and uttering a few short responses. Towards the end of the service, the Bible was brought with great ceremony by one of the priests, the other following him with a long wax candle, and placed on a desk in the body of the church. The priests, after crossing themselves, and making half a dozen low bows, kissed the book and retired; then all the nuns in succession did the same, and were followed by the people assembled in the church, many of whom lifted their children, too short to reach the sacred volume, and afterwards took them to kiss the image of the patron saint of the nunnery, whose dusky features appeared amidst the gold and precious stones which decorated the frame.

The church is large, and the screen divided into nearly a hundred compartments, each containing a saint's picture. The nunnery is enclosed by walls, on which are sixteen towers, formerly used for its defence against the Tartars. It is composed of the residences and offices of the nuns, a tall detached belfry, several chapels, besides the church, which is surmounted by a dome, and four cupolas. The cemetery is planted, and tastefully laid out. The church contains the tomb of Sophia, the sister of Peter the Great; and several other Czarinas, who desired to place their remains under the care of the "Miraculous Virgin of Smolensk."

For the satisfaction of the curious in such matters, we may state, that few of these nuns were pretty, but

some possessed a certain twinkling of the eye, which proved that their thoughts ofttimes wandered from heaven to earthly things. Nor, if all that is said be true, would the morality of the inmates of nunneries in Russia generally stand too close an inspection; their dissolute habits and laxity of discipline having in some districts forced the Government to interfere, and order a strict watch to be kept over them.

The Kremlin, situate upon a projecting point of land overhanging the Moskva, is about a third of a mile square, and is surrounded by a battlemented wall flanked by fantastic-looking towers. Within its boundaries are probably condensed more objects of interest than are contained in the same space in any other country. Palaces, churches, and museums crowd upon the view, of classic or Byzantine architecture, combining western art and Oriental splendour.

One locality, divided from the rest by an iron railing, is peculiarly sacred: it contains a group of churches—the holiest amongst the holy. That dedicated to the "Archangel Michael" is held in great veneration, from being the repository of the supposed remains of the boy Demetrius, which on certain occasions are exposed to view, and receive the homage and the kisses of an adoring multitude, who believe they see the real body of one of the last princes of the house of Ruric, murdered by his uncle, Boris Godounoff, and miraculously raised from the grave,

coffin and all, after being vainly sought for by his friends. The amount of adoration bestowed on this withered corpse is almost incredible. It is one of those wretched fictions which the Russian Church delights in perpetuating. Nor is it only the accounts of miraculous events that are hallowed by time, and handed down by tradition, to which a superstitious reverence is attached; but such tales are systematically manufactured by the Government at the present day, and promulgated by the priests, if it be thought desirable or necessary to make a strong impression on the minds of the people, or to excite their fanaticism to an unusual degree.

The Russian army, for instance, whatever may be its reverses, is always represented as victorious, some minor incident of a defeat being brought prominently forward as a proof of Divine interference in its behalf. Thus at every stage of Napoleon's progress in Russia thanksgivings were offered up by the Muscovite troops for supposed victories gained over the French; and he entered Moscow shortly after the last masses had been chanted with gratitude for the pretended check to his arms. The images of saints are generally the media through which these wonderful results are obtained.

The Cathedral of the Resurrection, where the Emperors are crowned, the church in which the Czars are buried, down to the time of Peter the Great, and several others, are held in high estimation.

CHAPTER V.

The Terema Palace—Napoleon at Moscow—The Tower of Ivan Valiki—A Great Gun—Russian Tricks—St. Basil's Church—The Foundling Hospital—Division of Classes—Prevention of Fire—Siberia—A Philanthropist—Siberian Exiles—Knocking off Chains—The Exiles' Prison in Moscow—A cherished Souvenir.

To describe the palaces of Moscow would be but a repetition of what we have already said of those at St. Petersburg. It is only necessary to state that, if possible, there has here been a more lavish expenditure of gold in order to render them magnificent in every respect.

The Terema Palace, however, derives its interest from other causes. It is the old residence of the Czars, and is of curious architecture, each of its four stories diminishing in size until the upper one terminates in a single room, which was occupied by the princesses and children, and whence the palace receives its name, the upper chamber in the peasants houses being called the "terema."

The ground-floor contains a series of vaulted apartments, amongst which are the audience-chamber, the throne-room, and a chapel, in which a lamp was

burning when we visited it. There the ancient Czars were first initiated into the mysteries of that religion, which they now use so unscrupulously to maintain their dominion over an enslaved and superstitious people. The walls and arched ceilings of many of these rooms are decorated with painted wreaths of flowers and fruit in brilliant colours, otherwise there is a simplicity which is looked for in vain in the newer palaces.

From the nature of the architecture a terrace is left at each story, and it was on the upper one of these that Napoleon stood to survey the prize he was destined to hold so short a time. The fair city then reposed in all her loveliness at his feet; the stillness of death reigned in her streets; her three hundred thousand inhabitants had fled before the conquering army, but part of whose legions had yet entered to grasp the longed-for spoil. Must not a deep pang of regret at that moment have pierced his heart at the memory of his fatal promise given—"All this is yours."

When from the Sparrow hills the advanced guard of the French first came in view of the flashing domes and minarets; and when, exhausted and depressed, the sight again fired them with enthusiasm; a wild shout of "Moscow—Moscow!" shrieked by the foremost, was borne from rank to rank, until the whole army united in the joyous cry, and each breast bounded with renewed hope. Then it was, anticipating an obstinate resistance,

that their great chief let fall those words which carried the excitement of his followers almost to madness.

Now the circumstances were changed, and the beauteous city lay like a prostrate unprotected captive appealing to his mercy. But what must this mighty genius have *felt*, when at the Peterskoi palace a few days after, he dictated that despatch, written by the lurid glare of a million flames, bursting in wild fury, cracking and hissing, and pointing their forked tongues as it were in derision at him—which conveyed to Paris the sad and sickening news of that conflagration — which he must have known was destroying the foundation of his own power and greatness, built up by so many years of toil! What bitter pangs of crushing agony must have torn that great soul, as looking on the red firmament, reflecting the burning city's crimson light, he thought of the amount of blood he had paid, and the treasure he had spent to attain that which, when within his grasp, even *his* lofty genius, ever fertile in resource, could not retain!

The most conspicuous object in the Kremlin is the tower of Ivan Valiki, a tall campanile rising two hundred feet from the plateau, crowned with gold, and looking like a grim giant presiding over the sacred spot. The bells it contains would be considered enormous, were they not completely eclipsed by the "Czar Kolkoi" (king of bells), placed on a block of

granite near. This huge monster, by the side of which great "Tom of Lincoln" is the veriest pigmy,* has the figure of the Empress Anne, in whose reign it was cast, upon it. The tower in which it was originally hung was burnt down, and in its fall, what appears a small notch, but which in reality is six feet high, was knocked out of it.

The Treasury is an enormous pile of buildings, containing thousands of objects of interest; amongst which are many magnificent salvers and salt-cellars of gold presented by the city of Moscow to various Czars, on visiting that place (following the ancient custom of offering the sacred bread and salt), and the crowns of Poland, Novgorod, Kazan, Siberia, Astrachan, and Crim Tartary, extinct kingdoms, now merged into this boundless empire.

As Russia possesses the largest bell, emblematic of her religion, (for bell-ringing seems to be an essential part of it,) so it might be supposed that she would possess the largest gun to represent her military character; and such is the case, for at the Arsenal may be seen a piece of artillery into which you might ram nearly a dozen sixty-eight pounders, trunnions and all; this giant gun being twenty-five feet long, with a bore of four feet in diameter. Where it came from, or by whom it was cast, we know not. It is surrounded by a number of other pieces of ancient

* Czar Kolkoi weighs four hundred thousand pounds, while Great Tom of Lincoln does not reach ten thousand.

ordnance. Near them are nine hundred French, Polish, Dutch, and Prussian cannons, with those of some other nations, arranged and classified, with descriptions of them on brass plates annexed. Whether they are all genuine, fairly won, trophies of martial prowess, is matter of question. We do not mean to doubt the bravery of the Russian army; but as a system of falsehood, especially in such matters, is constantly resorted to, it must be confessed that, in looking on this ostentatious array, shades of suspicion passed over our mind, which the recent act of sending the flags of an English merchant-vessel to St. Petersburg in triumph, as the colours of the unfortunate Tiger, known to have been burnt, does not tend to remove.

And now we must quit the Kremlin, although this slight sketch of its buildings can but feebly convey an idea of the reality. In fact, reader, being fearful of becoming tedious, we have not carried you into half the edifices it contains; but which, as conscientious travellers, we visited ourselves. Look for instance at that long, noble pile, simple, chaste, and beautiful in architecture, surmounted by a golden roof: it is the "Boltshoi Dvoretz," the great palace built by Alexander, near the ruins of one destroyed in 1812. By its side stands another of the same pure white stone, designed to contain the riches of the treasury. Yonder, too, is a smaller yet still imposing structure; the palace occupied in his early

married days, by the Emperor Nicholas, and where the heir to his throne was born. Internally it has an air of quiet comfort.

It is in the *tout ensemble*, however, that the Kremlin becomes so ravishing. Seen from the Sparrow hills, when illumined by the setting sun, or from the bridge over the Muscova, when its gold and silver domes are mellowed, and its outlines softened by twilight, nothing can be conceived more lovely.

Outside the wall of the Kremlin stands St. Basil's Church, which presents a group of no less than twenty-two towers and domes of all sizes, forms, and colours; the largest of which rises high above the others and is not even placed in the centre. There is no uniformity, no regularity, yet the whole has a certain kind of harmony which is pleasing. Internally it is divided into two stories, which are again cut up into a great number of what the Russians dignify by the name of churches, between and around which is a labyrinth of passages, painted in most unartistical style with flowers and garlands, which resemble rather the rapid productions of a scene-painter, got up for a rural *fête*, than the decorations of a temple devoted to religion.

Tradition records that Ivan the Terrible, being overjoyed with the beauty of this church, loaded the architect with riches and honour; but summoning him one fine morning to his presence, demanded whether he thought it possible to produce another

yet more beautiful. On being answered in the affirmative, the enraged monarch had the poor Italian's eyes put out, in order to make certain that this, his architectural idol, might not be surpassed. "Put not your faith in princes," was a warning this man of genius surely had reason to believe in.

We visited the Foundling Hospital at Moscow, which is the mother-institution of Russia; that of St. Petersburg having been founded long after. They are, however, conducted on the same principles. Here we saw the children of the educational part at their dinner, before which they sang the grace in a pleasing and affecting manner. These foundlings are watched from earliest infancy to detect any and what description of talent they may possess, and their education is afterwards directed to its cultivation: an admirable system, which might be adopted with immense advantage by other nations and on a more extensive scale. In order to carry out this object, immense workshops (Écoles des Métiers) have been established, which we found so interesting as to induce us to visit them a second time. There were boy engineers, engravers, cabinet-makers, carvers, cutlers, turners, designers, &c., whose works would not have disgraced older heads and hands in more civilised countries. Some of the machinery in particular was good; and the Government looks to these schools of mechanical art as a source whence to draw native practical engineers, to supply the place of those they

have hitherto imported from abroad, but more especially from England.

A genius for music, painting, or sculpture also receives encouragement and instruction for its development; and those boys who have a facility for acquiring general knowledge are educated for schoolmasters, while such as possess talents of a higher order are sent to the University, and subsequently rise to important positions in the State.

The institutions of Russia by no means prevent men of low origin from rising to the highest offices; on the contrary, the present Emperor has raised many of the meanest birth to distinction, who have played, and continue to play, by their talents, a conspicuous part in the political world. And it is probable that this class may be preferred as the most unscrupulous and willing agents of the man, who has thus advanced them to dignity and honour.

Although the Russian nation is divided into two classes only, the nobles and the people, any free man may become noble by serving the State in a civil or military capacity. The nobility is divided into fourteen grades, of which there are corresponding ranks in both services; but while an ensign in the army takes his place amongst the hereditary nobility, it is only personal in the civilian up to the grade equivalent to major.

Hommaire de Hell gives the following as the relative rank of the two classes: "The Registrar of a

college (the fourteenth and lowest grade) is equal to an Ensign; Secretary of government to second Lieutenant; Secretary of a college to Lieutenant; honorary Councillor to Captain; Assessor to Major; Councillor of the court to Lieutenant-colonel; Councillor of a college to Colonel; Councillor of State to Brigadier; Councillor of State (in office) to Major-general; Privy Councillor to Lieutenant-general; Privy-councillor (in office) to full General, &c. Once admitted into the fourteenth class, all the privileges accorded to the nobility upon the same footing as a count of the empire are enjoyed; excepting that slaves cannot be held by any person below the rank of assessor of a college, unless the individual has been born noble."

Moscow possesses a great many public educational establishments for both sexes. The Imperial University has museums of natural history and anatomy, and a good library. There are also an Armenian school, and several charitable institutions, amongst which are some fine hospitals.

All Russian towns are frequently devastated by fire. In the course of our wanderings we scarcely ever entered a place free from signs of these sad visitations, and this has led to the adoption of an unusual amount of vigilance, for their prompt discovery and extinction. A system of police is organised; the town if large is divided into districts, a tower being erected in each, on which a watchman parades night and day, with the necessary signals for giving

the alarm in case of necessity. Both in Petersburg and Moscow we saw these solitary guardians, constantly on the alert, moving on their little spaces, with the restlessness and watchfulness of a wild beast in a cage. In the villages, the peasants are bound to keep casks filled with water on the house-tops; and others to have horses even in readiness; but it is said, that by some fatal coincidence, the barrels are always found empty, and the horses nowhere, at the critical moment; and as all these villages are built of wood, it often happens that not a single cottage is left to afford an asylum to the wretched inhabitants.

Perhaps there is no other part of the world on which one's young imagination has been more excited than about that mysterious region known as Siberia. It was presented to the mind as the abode of the wretched exile; where buried in the solitude of wild, inhospitable climes, he lingered out a life of misery, thinking of the happy home from which he had been torn by the cruel hand of a despot, for the only crime of loving too well the country of his birth, the land of freer thoughts, and nobler actions than that of the Czar under whose iron sway it had fallen. Or it was pictured in a darker form, as the desolate mountain range bored with mines, into whose black recesses the light of heaven never penetrated, and where the sad crimeless victim, thrust into a living grave, toiled night and day to scratch from the side of his gloomy sepulchre, the gold destined to buy fresh

chains for other sufferers, or to pay the price of villany and treachery, by which more nations might be brought under the crushing yoke of the all-absorbing power of an empire, aiming at universal dominion.

With some such thoughts as these, we drove on the morning of the 4th of August, to the Sparrow hills, near Moscow. There stands the gloomy prison, the temporary asylum of those condemned to Siberian banishment. Being armed with a kind of introduction to Dr. Haase, the governor, we soon made his acquaintance.

We must here pause to say a few words of this extraordinary man. A German by birth, he had followed successfully the medical profession in Russia, and had devoted all his income to the relief of the unfortunate, wherever they were to be found; amongst others, he visited and took an interest in the prisoners, who find Moscow a short resting-place on their weary journey to Siberia. He listened to their tales of woe, appealed to the authorities in their behalf, alleviated their sufferings, and supplied their wants. Gradually his visits became more frequent, and after a time whenever a fresh convoy was to leave, the good Dr. Haase was to be seen wending his way to the place of their confinement; at last he was looked upon as almost necessary to the final arrangements for their departure. The name of this excellent man had become known to the poor prisoners themselves, and

they looked forward with pleasure to the moment for meeting him. That which would have been regarded by the officials (and there is no jack-in-office more jealous than he of Russia), in any other man as impertinent interference, was overlooked in him; and now for many years he has been recognized by the Emperor as governor of the prison, without having been positively appointed to the post. He has been decorated, but receives no pay or emolument; his philanthropy being of that exalted kind, that it finds a more triumphant and lasting reward in the execution of its own divine impulses, than any amount of "filthy lucre" could bestow.

Such, then, was the man who now became known to us. We were received by him with kindness, and taken at once to see the prisoners, who were about to start on their journey of six thousand four hundred versts on foot and in chains, and which occupies seven months in its accomplishment. They had attended Divine service, and now ranged in a row, awaited only the usual final questions and adieus. There were in all, about forty men and women; each of the former having one temple shaved, which gave a most disagreeable expression to the eye of that side, and in fact to the whole countenance. They had been committed for various crimes from murder to simple robbery, but there were on this occasion no political offenders. In addition to the exiles, there were several women and children, the latter of all ages under four years, the

youngest being but a few weeks old; these were the wives and children of some of the men, accompanying them in their banishment. The Russian law permitting, but not forcing, the women to follow their husbands, and take with them all their children under the age we have mentioned above, the marriage being dissolved in the event of the wives objecting to go.

One poor creature, full of grief, petitioned Dr. Haase to have her eldest child of three years sent after her by the next convoy, as, from some informality, it had been left behind; and this request was immediately granted, though she had already two younger ones with her. Each individual in succession, having been asked whether he had any request or complaint to make, and examined as to the state of his health, had a piece of money, and any other present, sent by the charitable for distribution, given him, and then they started, the men chained together in pairs, but the women being free. Carts were provided for the wives and children, and any who might fall sick on the road, and as far as lay in the power of Dr Haase, the comforts of the whole were attended to, and he personally examined the minutiæ of the arrangements.

These prisoners march about fifteen or twenty miles a-day, and have occasional resting days; the hardships of their journey having been greatly mitigated by the benevolent exertions of this good man, perseveringly exercised through a long series of years; but

as they recede from the centre of power, their sufferings are said to increase, and their numbers are considerably diminished before they reach their destination.

The greatest joy of the life of Dr. Haase, is to watch the process of knocking the shackles from the legs of the newly-arrived prisoners, thereby permitting their week's sojourn at Moscow, which is the central depôt for twenty-two departments, to be really a time of rest. To see this, we accompanied him, after we had watched the sad procession which had just parted, for some little distance on its road.

In a long low room we found about twenty men, who had come the day before from the provinces. A movement took place on our entering, and the rattling chains grated harshly on the ear. A passing shade of pleasure lighted up the countenances of most as Dr. Haase passed amongst them, but was soon succeeded by a state of passive resignation.

The blacksmith was in readiness with his tools, and one by one the strong rivets flew from the shackles. I wish my powers permitted me to describe the expression of that kind man's face as he sat, the type of the true philanthropist: there was something more than pleasure; there was religion in every lineament; his eyes were lighted by a holy fire, and around his lips played a smile of benevolent joy, such as I had never seen before.

He now mingled with these prisoners, and ad-

dressed words of affection and kindness to each: the eyes of one became full of tears—tears, too, bearing all the evidences of deep and genuine feeling. We felt interested in this man, and inquired the nature of his crime; to our surprise we found he was nothing less than a murderer. Here, then, was a being whose hands were dyed in the life's blood of his fellow, yet whose heart was melted like an infant's by a few words of kindly sympathy. Who knows what that man might have become had his better feelings been earlier fostered and encouraged? Perhaps that short sentence had been almost the first ever addressed to him in tones free from harshness or cruelty.

A group attracted our attention; it consisted of three young Cossack brothers; one had been condemned some months before, but, having disease of the heart, had not been forwarded to Siberia. He now implored Dr. Haase to permit him to accompany the other two, who had just arrived, and his wish was gratified.

We went over the prison, consisting of a large quadrangle of one story, having the windows towards the court. The rooms were fitted up with benches of wood, on which the prisoners slept without mattresses; but this is no hardship to them, for, as we stated before, the Russian peasant knows no such luxury as a bed. Dr. Haase informed us, however, that exiles from the higher classes were provided with them.

In a small room apart were two remarkably handsome-looking men. They were the chiefs of a border tribe submitted to Russia, but some suspicion of infidelity having fallen upon them, they had been confined nine months in this prison; and on our entrance, anxiously asked Dr. Haase for some information of their coming fate. Two finer countenances could scarcely be imagined.

The rooms were tolerably lighted, and, for a Russian prison, clean and pretty well ventilated.

The night before our departure from Moscow, Dr. Haase called to take leave of us, having done so once before in the day during our absence. Addressing me, he said, "I was anxious to see you, as I wished to give you something in remembrance of your visit to the prison, and I thought nothing would be so gratifying to you as a set of the chains you saw knocked from the legs of one of those poor prisoners." It was with extreme pain that I felt myself obliged to decline a present intended to give me pleasure; but I explained that it was my intention to visit many other countries, and that in going through the custom-houses I should run the chance of being taken for an escaped convict, or, under the most favourable view, be regarded as a very suspicious character. He fully appreciated my reasons, and then grasping the hands of both my friend and myself in his, he embraced us on each cheek, and bade us adieu with a blessing.

The memory of this noble-hearted old man will be ever dearly cherished by me. Through his instrumentality the sufferings of thousands have been alleviated, and the horrors of an exile's existence much mitigated. It is stated that prisoners are not now sent to the mines for life: and when there, are not entirely confined in them, having certain hours for relaxation, and the Sunday free from labour: while those condemned for minor crimes and slight political offences are forwarded to the southern provinces and treated with greater leniency.

CHAPTER VI.

Troitska Monastery—Russian Churches—The Pilgrims' Worship—The Altar and "Ikonostas"—St. Servius—St. Servius at Silistria—The Treasury—The Refectory—The Pilgrims—View from the Tower—Leave Troitska—Leave Moscow—Cotton Lords—Cossack Stations.

ABOUT sixty versts from Moscow stands the monastery of Troitska, a place too celebrated in Russian history to be passed without a visit. On the morning of the 5th, therefore, we started for it, with a party of fellow-travellers. The road in many parts presents views strikingly picturesque, being hilly and well wooded. We passed hundreds of pilgrims toiling on their way to offer up their prayers, their vows, and their devotions at the shrine of St. Servius.

Outside the monastery walls the monks have built an hotel for the accommodation of the richer pilgrims, or curious visitors like ourselves. Here we put up, and soon after our arrival dinner was served. While we were discussing the merits of the "*cuisine*" a movement was heard, and the chief of the police in full uniform, as a colonel of the Russian army, was ushered into the room. He came to pay a visit of ceremony

to one of our party, Monsieur de ———, an *attaché* of the French Embassy, who had brought, and instantly forwarded, a letter of introduction to him. He offered his services to show us over the monastery the next morning, which were, of course, gladly accepted.

The Russian churches are almost invariably built of the form of the Greek cross, the nave, choir, and transepts being of the same length. A portion of the choir is divided off by the "Ikonostas,"—a high screen, covered in front with pictures of saints, the faces and hands only of which are painted, the bodies being of metal, generally gilt, but sometimes of pure gold. There are three doors in the "Ikonostas," behind which is the sanctuary, wherein stands the altar, immediately opposite the middle door, which is generally of open carved work. Women are never permitted to enter this sanctuary, being, we suppose, held by the Greek-Russian Church too low in estimation to be considered worthy of such an honour. The spot whereon the altar stands being consecrated, is ever after held most sacred, and on entering these sanctuaries we always found that great care was taken to prevent too near an approach to it. In front of the "Ikonostas," at some few feet distant from it, runs a low balustrade, separating the elevated portion on which it stands, and which is reached by two or three steps, from the body of the church. Here, on each side, is placed the choir, and here also some important parts of the service are performed.

There is no instrumental music whatever in the Russian Church, nor are seats of any kind permitted; the congregation either stand, kneel, or kiss the ground. We give this short sketch for the information of such of our readers as are unacquainted with the details, in order that they may better comprehend what we are about to describe.

Early on the morning of the 6th, punctual to his appointment, we accompanied the chief of the police to the monastery, and went direct to the Troitska (Trinity) Church, whence it derives its name, in which the morning mass had commenced. The place was crowded to suffocation with pilgrims of all classes, some of whom still carried the dust upon them of five thousand miles performed on foot, and all absorbed in profound attention to the service. Individually, I would fain have taken up a position in some unobtrusive part of the church, from which to have observed the ceremony. But this was not to be; the colonel had already announced his intended visit, and Cossacks posted at the door, immediately on our arrival, commenced clearing a passage through the dense crowd, pushing the devout worshippers right and left with most unceremonious roughness. Through this opening, then, we marched to the front of the altar, and stood curious spectators of an impressive spectacle, in which all but ourselves were actors.

The body of the church was large, and the windows being very small, but little light was derived from

them. Huge chandeliers of silver attached to long chains were suspended from the lofty roof; immense candlesticks of the same metal contained great wax candles, and lamps of coloured cut-glass hung here and there, while before the shrines of various saints burned hundreds of tapers, placed by the pious pilgrims' hands. Yet all these were insufficient to throw more than an uncertain and sombre light around, but still enough to show that the "Ikonostas" was one blaze of gold and gems, relieved only by the dusky faces of some hundred saints and apostles.

The central door was now thrown open, and the altar displayed to view, above which was a magnificent canopy, supported by four columns, the whole of massive silver gilt. Beneath this stood what at first appeared like a mysterious fire of varied, soft, and glowing coloured dancing light, but which proved to be the casket, or box of the host, whose lid was set with a piled-up mass of unusually large precious stones, which, reflecting the rays of the flickering tapers, produced the dazzling and beautiful effect we have so feebly attempted to describe.

Now the officiating priests issued from the side doors of the "Ikonostas" clothed in costly robes of woven gold and silver, splendidly ornamented with choice pearls; followed by the metropolitan wearing his mitre, and carrying a superb chalice, and then by a priest with a rich salver on his head.

Meanwhile a "diacon" came round throwing his

censer in every direction; until the incense rose, filling the whole edifice with its filmy cloud, and its odour penetrating into every recess. The assembled choir, from the body of the church, burst forth in solemn strains. This over, a minor priest, of unusually large stature, chanted that part of the service calling on "all infidels to depart from the church, while the believers supplicated the Lord for his peace," in a voice of such depth, and power, which, as it swelled and rolled through the building, sounded more like harmonized thunder than anything human.

A procession of the bread and wine then took place, the metropolitan carrying the cup, and the service closed by administering the sacrament; after which the people crowded to kiss the tomb and shrine, of St. Servius which, like the altar, was surmounted by a canopy with its supporting columns of massive silver-gilt.

The monastery of Troitska was founded early in the 14th century, by a monk who had gained a high reputation, from the simplicity of his habits, the sanctity of his life, and the strict seclusion in which he dwelt. Sought by many religious enthusiasts for spiritual consolation, a society was formed, and the monastery built. The monk was elected Archimandrite, and the monastery continued to gain in celebrity; the noble and the rich visited it, and from the offerings they made, it gradually grew in wealth and power, until at last it played a conspicuous part in Russian

history. Twice it withstood lengthened sieges of the Polish army, and was considered by the people to have been miraculously preserved. Peter the Great took refuge within its walls, when in danger from a threatened revolt of the Strelitzes, and on a second occasion from the enmity of his sister Sophia.

The monk, after his death, was canonized under the name of St. Servius, and his image, when carried before advancing armies was, and is still, believed to insure certain destruction, or discomfiture, to the enemies of Russia by its miraculous powers; and it is the custom, when it is thought necessary to excite the enthusiasm, or sustain the courage of the soldiers, to raise this sacred symbol, on which the names of the battles where it has appeared have been carefully recorded.

The image of St. Servius is said to have been used, on a recent occasion near Silistria, when the Russian troops were led against the Turks. Whether the Saint has lost his miraculous power, or the soldiers have ceased to believe in it, becomes a question for the speculative philosopher; but it is quite evident, that the last appearance of his representative has been unaccompanied by the usual success: a circumstance most likely to discourage and disorganize a superstitious soldiery, who, going from one extreme to the other, would come to the conclusion that fighting could be of no avail, since they had been deserted by their patron Saint of battles, under

whose banner they had hitherto fought and conquered.

The revenues of Troitska were immensely reduced by Catherine the Great, and its income is said at present to be barely equal to the expenditure; nevertheless its unproductive wealth is enormous: on going over the treasury we found immense boxes filled with pearls and precious stones of all kinds without number; priests' robes of cloth of gold covered in beautiful designs, with the richest pearls; an altar said to have cost a million rubles, besides rooms full of other valuables, which we shall not attempt to describe. There are, however, amongst them, many interesting relics, to which the priests attach immense importance; they point out, with becoming pride, the dresses and shoes of St. Servius, of the simplest and coarsest material; they expatiate upon his merits, in thus casting aside the vanities of the world; but, singular to say, they carefully avoid imitating his example.

They showed us a miraculous stone, which they seem to hold in great veneration; relating that it was found by a peasant, and taking great care to impress upon us that it was a natural production, which we trust we shall not be condemned for disbelieving. This wonderful stone, when held up to the light, displays the kneeling figure of a monk praying before our Saviour on the cross, the outline of all being perfect, even to the most minute points. Here is one of those

huge Bibles which are constantly to be met with in Russian churches—though generally not so rich as this, which, with its covers blazing with precious stones, is said to weigh upwards of a hundredweight. Here, too, we saw a dressing-gown of Ivan the Terrible, a gentleman who has been handed down to posterity for his brutality; and amongst other valiant deeds, for having taken much delight at sending noble dames into fits by the extreme ferocity of his glance.

From the treasury we went to the refectory, a large and lofty hall, the ceiling of which is richly painted; at the end is a remarkably pretty chapel. There was a time when this refectory was well-filled, but now there are but a hundred and twenty monks—about sufficient to occupy one-fifth of its extent. Externally it is curiously painted, in all the colours of the rainbow.

The hospital is attended by the monks, some of whom have a slight knowledge of medicine. There we saw, reposing in a sleep as tranquil as that of an infant, an old monk, over whose blanched head a hundred and eight summers had rolled; but we were told that another, who had just left to walk to a neighbouring monastery, was two years older, having reached the extraordinary age of a hundred and ten. In a bed near the old man was a withered-looking hermit, who had lived for three years under ground, never, during that period, having seen the light;

being found nearly dead, he was removed to this monastery. The wards of the hospital were clean and well ventilated.

All poor pilgrims who present themselves, are fed and housed for three days and nights. A visit to a great apartment, in which several hundreds were dining—there being a greater number than usual—proved highly interesting. Excellent soup and bread formed their meal, to which most of them appeared to do ample justice. There were men and women from every part of the Muscovite dominions; some from the shores of the Caspian, others from the Bessarabian provinces, and one man had actually performed the weary pilgrimage from Tobolsk. Such being the universal veneration for, and the belief in, the purifying influence of a visit to the holy shrine of St. Servius. Amongst the pilgrims on the road we noticed many more women than men.

An imperial palace, once occupied by Peter the Great, has now been converted into a theological college, in which, at the period of our visit, were upwards of a hundred students. There is a regular staff of professors, composed of both ecclesiastics and laymen. Independent of these, four hundred orphan boys are educated by the monks, and fed, clothed, and housed, at the expense of the monastery.

The palace of the metropolitan (archbishop and superior of the establishment) is an unassuming

building; and the gardens near are tastefully arranged.

Bells are never suspended in a Russian church, but in a detached tower; and at Troitska was one greater in height than that of Ivan Valiki, in the Kremlin of Moscow, doing duty for no less than nine churches within the walls. We ascended this tower, and thence looking down upon the monastery, in the middle of which it stands, we were enabled, for the first time, to comprehend its great extent and strength. It is surrounded by a wall thirty feet high, of immense thickness, and flanked by numerous towers, the whole having the appearance of a strongly-fortified town, and is strikingly remarkable from the eighty golden domes and cupolas which decorate its churches. All the buildings we have mentioned are within this enclosure, besides some hundreds of monks' cells. From this elevated position, a lovely prospect of the surrounding country, rich and picturesque, is obtained. On one hand might be seen another distant monastery embosomed in trees, near a smiling lake, with a green island in its centre, and in every direction some church or village played its part in the view, and contributed to its beauty.

Outside the walls a gay scene presented itself. Numberless little wooden sheds were occupied by pilgrims, who, not desiring to partake of the charity of the monastery, were yet not of a class to go to the hotel. Here then, they were seen refreshing the inner man

with a variety of viands, cooked on the spot, or taking deep draughts of tea, in an atmosphere of steam from the hissing "somovar" (Russian urn). An infinite number of stalls displayed their trifles, — such as children's toys, and other wares, usually found in a country fair of England. But it was in the neighbouring shops that the devout pilgrim, or the curious stranger, found his greatest attraction. In these were shown off an unlimited variety of saints and other objects, carved in wood, of which the workmanship was admirable.

Towards the evening we left Troitska, on our return to Moscow, after taking leave of the monks, who did not forget to wait on us with a box for donations. Our dinner was served in true Parisian style, "à la carte," at twenty-five kopecs the plate; but while it would have been contrary to the rules of monkish hospitality to have charged for beds, it was deemed quite correct that visitors should pay for linen, which we were only too happy to do, especially as our night's rest had not been disturbed by the usual enemies to the slumbers of the traveller.

The same party which accompanied us to Troitska, having arranged to go to Nijni Novgorod, we hired a diligence for the journey, the relays of horses being more certain by this mode of travelling; and in many other respects we fancied it possessed advantages not to be found in posting. But these hopes were not altogether realized; for while we paid considerably

more for our places than by the "Malleposte," we were four hours longer on the road. By that conveyance, however, no seats could be had unless the passengers' names were booked a fortnight or three weeks before; and even then a bribe to the official would probably have been required to secure them.

On the morning of the ninth, not without feelings of regret, we took leave of Moscow, in the contemplation of whose loveliness we had experienced so much real pleasure. The day was fine, the road good, the horses fresh, and for the first stage we rattled on so merrily, that, barring the dust, everything appeared "couleur de rose." But as all bright things are evanescent, so the more sombre hues of reality soon superseded the radiant tints which hope had painted; and we found, instead of restless horses anxious for the road, that miserable looking animals, worn out by just five times their usual work, with projecting bones, and hollow eyes, were tied, not harnessed, to our cumbrous vehicle. On sundry occasions a stand-still appeared inevitable, but by dint of coaxing, scolding, and whipping, the "yamstchik" moved them along at about the rate of five English miles an hour.

We were too experienced to trust to the chance of what might turn up in the shape of provisions at the wayside inns, so a well-filled portable larder supplied our wants in the eating line. And here let me recommend those of my young readers who have had

but slight experience in such matters, never in travelling out of the ordinary beat, to neglect laying in a store of prog which may serve him on an emergency, for it is wonderful with what complacency one views, after a satisfactory feed, the same incident or delay which the pinchings of hunger would magnify into an overwhelming misfortune.

Near Vladimir, we overtook the prisoners whom we had seen depart the previous Sunday from Moscow. They had walked eighteen miles a-day beneath a broiling sun, but appeared little fatigued. In addition to their guard on foot, they were now accompanied by some mounted Cossacks, and an officer.

This district is rich in agricultural productions, the country being more cultivated and more varied than that between St. Petersburg and Moscow. It is here and there studded by cotton and other manufactories. On inquiring the names of their owners, we were astonished to find that real princes and veritable barons are the cotton lords of Russia.

Towards the end of our journey we traversed an immense forest, for thirty or forty versts, in which a great fire had recently taken place. Many of the trees were entirely destroyed, while of others the black and charred trunks alone remained. At intervals of a few versts were shabby-looking huts, decorated with rudely-made rusty lances. Small stages were near them, whence rose long poles,

covered with spirally-wound hay-bands, and having dangling hoops of the same at the top. These were the stations of small detachments of Cossacks, who acted as a kind of rural police during the fair; and the poles were the signals used on an emergency, by setting the hay on fire, which could be continued from post to post, along the whole line.

CHAPTER VII.

Arrive at Nijni Novgorod—Hotel Boubenoff—Influence of Commerce—A Mania for Bells—Refined Gipsies—Russian Dances—A German Breakfast—View over the Oka—The Town of Nijni Novgorod — Decide on Descending the Volga—Looking for a Boat—A Bargain made—A Notary's Consolation—Our Volga Boat—Preparing for the Voyage—A Deserter—Taking a Prisoner—An abject Slave—A wild Crew—Boatmen's Repast—Battlemented Monasteries—A romantic Village—Almost an Adventure.

As the first sight of land refreshes the straining eyes of the sailor, and banishes in an instant the memory of the perils he has gone through, so the domes and walls of the Kremlin of Nijni bursting on our vision, chased all thoughts of suffocating dust, and of the seedy horses by which our journey had been spun out to the unusual length of fifty-two hours.

We were soon in the outskirts of the great fair of Nijni Novgorod; and then plunged into a sea of bustling, busy thousands. Amidst piles of merchandise, and a jabber of tongues, we slowly followed in the wake of a moving mass of odd-looking vehicles. Crossing a bridge over the Oka, we entered the suburbs of the town, and drove to the hotel Boubenoff;

a place which we at that time looked upon as the vilest hole that ever wretched traveller was doomed to wallow in: not that we at all expected to "sleep upon a bed of roses," or luxuriate in their soft perfume; therefore we contented ourselves with the hard mattresses, and cheerfully submitted to the questionable odours of mingled filth which stole through every part of the establishment: and, indeed, subsequent experience taught us, that the Hotel Boubenoff would bear a favourable, although an "odious" comparison with other quarters, of which we found ourselves the victimized occupants.

As we had thought by day and dreamed by night, since quitting Moscow, of the fair of Nijni, we lost as little time as possible in relieving our persons of the accumulated dust of the journey, and then sallied forth to explore new mines of information and pleasure. This fair, however, has been so often, and so well described, that we shall only give a rough outline of our impressions.

A few minutes' walk from the hotel brought us into the midst of a heterogeneous mass of men, representing half the nations of the earth. Eastern barbarism and western civilization, attracted together like bodies in an opposite state of electricity, here met, embraced, and then were again repelled to the distant lands whence they came. While a few months before, the spot on which they stood, formed but a portion of the river's bed, ere another year could

roll by, the rushing Volga's stream would again fill the very houses, wherein were now stored the costly fabrics and rich productions of every clime.

How strange is that influence which commerce exercises over her children; who, separated by deep-rooted prejudice, by diversity of religion, and of race, yet meet in amity upon her neutral ground! Here the proud Moslem and the detested Giaour, the bigoted Muscovite and the despised Jew, the follower of the Pope, and the worshipper of the Grand Lama, the Protestant and the Infidel, mingled hand in hand like the offspring of a common mother.

The lords of the creation appeared to have almost excluded the softer sex from this great rendezvous; but the few women who jostled in the crowd, seemed, from their muscular development, quite capable of fighting the battle of life.

Never was a greater variety of physiognomies congregated in the same locality; and yet but one expression pervaded the whole. The broad cheeks of the Mongol, the classic features of the Greek, the sinister face of the Jew, or the intelligent countenance of the German, all indicated the soul-absorbing influence of business. Of nothing else could they talk; of nothing else did they think. When we were introduced to a wealthy Tartar of Kazan, he returned our bows, by inquiring our line of business; and on learning that curiosity alone had brought us here, and was taking us to the distant shores of the Caspian,

he exclaimed to our interpreter, with a mingled look of pity and contempt, "What fools they must be!"

In wandering through the five-and-twenty miles of streets, some composed of permanent stone houses, others of temporary depôts and stalls, every conceivable object of necessity or luxury meets the eye, in bewildering variety; and it is only after a certain time that the mind descends from general to particular things. Here are mountains of gaudily-painted chests from Kazan, of sizes to suit the wardrobe of each purchaser; there great piles of hides from the Ukraine, bales of cotton goods from the factory of a Russian prince, heaps of fur from the icy regions of Archangel, the wealth of Persia, the treasures of the Ural, tea from China, and iron from Siberia. Each department of commerce has its particular quarter. Thus business is transacted with facility, and bargains are concluded in which millions of rubles are involved, with a rapidity which would astonish our richest merchants.

The most characteristic part of the fair was decidedly that devoted to manufactured metals, from the immense quantity of bells there displayed, but more especially those destined for churches. A strong framework was erected on which great numbers of them, varying from one to five tons in weight, were suspended. The Russians have a sort of mania for bells. It matters little what the sound, whether sharp or flat, whether full or harsh; and if a number are

together, the laws of harmony may be set at defiance without offending the "moujiks'" ear; for next to getting drunk, nothing makes him so supremely happy as being lulled to sleep by the monotonous or discordant sounds of his much-loved bells. It, therefore, becomes the great ambition of each village to possess one or more: to be without any is almost disreputable, and indicates on the part of the inhabitants a depravity of taste which their neighbours regard with commiseration.

In the midst of so much to please the eye and satisfy the wants, of the hundred thousand beings here collected, it would have been sad could no professor of the gastronomic art have been found, to cater for the appetites of those who like ourselves had not yet been initiated into the horrors of a Russian "cuisine." Accordingly we had no difficulty in finding the "restaurant" of M. Morell, a French "artiste" of no mean pretensions, where everything was to be had from "paté de foi gras" to "poulet à la Marengo," and from bitter ale to sparkling champagne.

This, then, became our head-quarters for *serious* feeding, while curiosity led us to pay passing visits to the various other coffee-houses. Amongst these was one large and clean, much frequented of an evening from having a celebrated company of singers, descended from a race of gipsies. They were in number about twenty of both sexes, the women

predominating. It would have been difficult, by costume or manner, to have traced any connection between these people and those vagabonds who are to be found as well in Russia as other parts of Europe. The men were dressed in evening coats and shiny boots, and evidently prided themselves upon the tie of their white cravats; and the fine figures of the women were decked in silk and satin dresses, the cut of which would not have injured the reputation of "Palmire;" but the dark complexion, regular features, and the black flashing eye at once proclaimed their origin. In their songs there was a wild and thrilling harmony; and they acted, in face and gesture, with admirable truth the passions intended to be displayed in the words.

Amongst the Russian peasantry the women are seldom heard to sing, the men appearing to have a monopoly in this accomplishment; not so, however, with dancing, and the toes and heels of the woman once being set in motion, she enters into the spirit of the dance, and continues it with untiring perseverance. We had several opportunities of seeing the national dances at Nijni, which are not unlike those of some savage nations. The most civilized amongst them somewhat resembles a Highland reel.

Having received an invitation to breakfast with a young German merchant, we made our appearance at the appointed hour, at one of the storehouses in a street of the Chinese quarter. The ground-floor was

filled by a quantity of merchandise, through which we made our way, and, ascending to the floor above, entered a small chamber, the furniture of which consisted of a few chairs and a rough table. In the corner was a goodly array of familiar-looking, squatty shaped bottles, on which were circular labels, ostentatiously announcing them to contain "London stout." There were no evidences of the breakfast we had come to partake of, and we began to fancy that we had either misunderstood, or our host had forgotten, the invitation; two or three other guests, however, soon arrived, and then our entertainer made his appearance, with good-nature in his countenance, and a bottle of English pickles in his hand. After greeting us with a hearty welcome, he said, "Now we will take our 'déjeuner.'" My friend and I exchanged glances, thinking that pickles and porter alone were not likely to satisfy the cravings of hunger which began to be manifested. At this moment a servant made his appearance carrying a large bowl containing cold boiled chopped potatoes, into which the pickles were thrown, and a "*kartoffel salad*" was the result. Every one attacked this with immense zest, and in combination with the stout, it constituted the whole of our repast.

A pressing invitation from the same gentleman to dine the next day at "Morell's" was accepted, but not without some misgivings as to the nature of the entertainment. A large party was invited to meet us,

and all doubts soon vanished; for our friend fully proved that no one understood better than himself the art of ordering a good dinner. Here we tasted, for the first time, the sterlet, a fish found only in the Volga and its tributaries, and for which the Russian noble is said to pay at times enormous sums.

Nothing can be done in Russia without reference to religion; therefore is the fair of Nijni, placed under the immediate care and protection of St. Macarius. It was formerly held at Macarieff, a town lower down the Volga, in a locality which the Saint might have found more convenient; but his personal comfort having been set aside, it was removed to its present position in 1817. Situate on a low tongue of land, at the junction of the Volga and Oka, it is admirably placed for embarking and landing goods, having two sides of a triangle as water-frontage.

Besides a great central building, the upper part of which is occupied by the governor during the fair, and the lower part by the post and other offices, bazaar, &c., there are Russian and Catholic churches, and a mosque; a theatre and many minor places of amusement.

The Oka, below the bridge of boats leading from the fair to the town, presented an extraordinary "coup d'œil." Innumerable craft of cumbrous form, or oriental style, were packed so closely together that we sought in vain a glimpse of the living stream on which they floated. Large vessels of one kind pre-

dominated in number. They had great square projections stem and stern, ornamented with a profusion of wood carvings in queer patterns; while on the deck were quaintly fashioned little pavilions, made with lattice-work of intricate designs; the whole being touched up in bright and gaudy colouring, and decorated with small flags: while on the bows were painted two enormous eyes, such as are seen in the great junks of China. From the middle of each vessel rose a tall jet-black mast, carrying a single yard of enormous length for a huge square sail, the only one generally used. Beside these were an infinite variety of boats and barges, large and small, but all differing in form and appearance from any seen in other parts of Europe.

The town of Nijni Novgorod is about two versts from the fair, and on the top of a hill, having a steep ascent. After the glories of the Kremlin of Moscow there is nothing which particularly calls for remark in that of Nijni. From its walls, however, as from a public garden and terraced walk beyond, magnificent views over the Volga and Oka are obtained; but the best position for seeing the animated spectacle of the fair is from a hill on the opposite side of the town. The principal streets are good, and converge towards the entrance to the Kremlin. There are many churches, some monasteries, and a nunnery. The place from its air of quietness, almost of desertion, contrasts strongly with the noisy, busy fair in its neighbourhood.

As we had decided on descending the Volga, the preparations for the voyage occupied our attention from the moment we arrived at Nijni. We ordered André, the servant engaged at Moscow, to make inquiries as to the best way of carrying out our intentions; and at the same time we waited upon the resident managers of the steam companies to learn what we could from them. The difficulties, however, of obtaining satisfactory information were so great, that the necessity of fixing upon our own plan, without reference to the opinions of others, soon became evident. The uncertain departure of the steamers, and the restrictions entailed by that mode of conveyance, caused us immediately to reject it.

There were plenty of boats of every description, but most of them having brought merchandise to the fair, were engaged to take return cargoes to the villages or towns whence they came, while immense numbers were provision-boats, which arrived and departed daily. Many there were of a construction suitable to our purpose; but we found on visiting them so much filth, and such an abundant supply of insects, that we at once abandoned all idea of submitting our persons to their tender mercies. Indeed, every craft which had been previously occupied, appeared to have attracted such a number of uninvited visiters, that possession could have only been taken by an unconditional surrender of all personal comfort. And we were too well aware that no amount of hot

water or scrubbing would dislodge the enemy when the citadel was fairly in his power.

Our thoughts, therefore, naturally turned to the new boats, of which there were plenty for sale; but, alas! none were fitted up for the conveyance of passengers. Yet minor obstacles were banished as soon as they arose; and having fixed upon a likely-looking craft, we charged André to ascertain some particulars concerning its price; for to have appeared ourselves in the affair, would certainly, at the most moderate calculation, have doubled the demand.

We had no reason to doubt André's honesty, yet he was a Russian, and about to deal with Russians; and, therefore, as a certain amount of cheating was sure to go on, we resigned ourselves to our fate, as all wise travellers would have done under similar circumstances; making inquiries meantime in every direction, and picking up scraps of information, which, when amalgamated, left us sufficiently knowing on the matter to prevent our being taken in to any very great extent.

Yet no time was to be lost, for even with our limited experience of the Russians we had already become aware, that in work of this description despatch was not likely to be the order of the day; and that no reliance whatever could be placed on promises or assertions, however vehemently given. André's first success was to find a man, who said he knew another who had a friend in every respect

likely to manage our business; but he required three rubles for divulging the important secret. Now as we were by no means desirous of having the familiar adage of "a fool and his money soon parted" applied to us, we declined his polite offer. Nevertheless, we told our friend that if he would bring a person with whom we could come to an arrangement, we might give him the said three rubles on embarkation. A few minutes only elapsed after this promise, and we were in deep conversation with two long-bearded boatmen, wrangling and bargaining, and finally came to a verbal agreement upon general points, subject to any modifications we might think proper to adopt.

The boat fixed upon was to be bought, a cabin built, sails and proper gear provided, with two men to steer and ten to row. We were to stop at any towns we pleased on the river, and the voyage to Astrachan was to be accomplished within a given number of days, always making allowance for the stoppages.

The next point was to find a notary, to have these terms embodied in an agreement, for woe to the unfortunate wight who trusts to anything but a written document duly "signed, sealed, and delivered," to which a Russian is the second party; chicanery and falsehood being universal. Indeed, we often found the latter resorted to, where there appeared no possible reason excepting that inveterate habit of

lying, which rendered speaking the truth a work of great difficulty.

The notary was found, the instructions given, and an appointment made for all parties to meet next morning. Meanwhile André had either been listening to tales of murder and robbery, or, being naturally a coward, had conjured up imaginary horrors; for on making his appearance, he asked with a woe-begone physiognomy, how we should defend ourselves in case of an attack, seeing that we were only three against twelve. We thought but little of this at the moment, and went off to the notary. The agreement was drawn out, and translated into French for our edification.

Everything appeared "en réglé," and we were about to put our signatures to the document, when we found André engaged in a conversation which evidently profoundly interested him. Our two steersmen also, who were to sign the agreement, seemed no indifferent listeners, and they ever and anon uttered short sentences, the meaning of which was somewhat indicated in the expressions of their faces. Our curiosity being aroused we requested a translation of the conversation. "Monsieur," said André, "I asked the notary, what three of us could do against twelve men in the boat in case of an attack? and he says that we are to make our minds perfectly easy, for about three years ago, a gentleman went down the Volga in the same way as we are

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about to do, and was robbed and murdered by the crew; but that having retained a list of their names, they were all detected, convicted, and duly punished for the crime."

We saw no particular consolation in this anecdote; but thought André a goose for displaying his terror before the two boatmen. So we bade him assure them, that we had no fears whatever of their attacks; that we should always be prepared with a barrel for each of them, as we were provided with very convenient weapons of defence, in the shape of revolvers. This announcement appeared to satisfy all parties. The notary smiled approbation; the anxious cloud vanished from André's brow, the two boatmen devoutly crossed themselves, and bowed; and the document having been signed, the ceremony was concluded.

The boat we had chosen was forty-five feet long, and its greatest breadth eight feet. In the construction of the cabin we soon found that all our fancied precautions were insufficient to insure tolerable workmanship, and instead of the comfortable, well-devised plan we had pictured, all the arrangements were of the roughest description. The top was unfortunately composed of newly-stripped bark; the sides were conveniently adapted for taking views of the surrounding scenery, having large chinks, through which the wind played in refreshing eddies; and as the barked roof soon after our departure displayed divers

and sundry rents from the drying effects of the mid-day sun, the little window we had established became a superfluous adjunct.

Still most of these defects were gradually developed, and as a persistence on our part in requiring everything to be arranged, after our own notions of what would be most agreeable, would only have led to perpetual squabbling without a beneficial result, and certainly with an indefinite detention, we made a "virtue of necessity," and accepted with a good grace that which we had evidently no power to prevent. The cabin was constructed of the width of the boat, and was about six feet six inches long, having berths on each side, which with mattresses and cushions formed beds at night and couches by day.

While this important work was going on in the boat, we were not idle in collecting together the necessary utensils and furniture for our voyage; though the last requires no very long notice, consisting only of a large oblong wooden box, which occupied the middle of the cabin, and served at once for cupboard and larder, and in turn for washing-stand, toilet, and dining tables. On the former, however, a more elaborate expenditure of capital was called for, and gradually our rooms at the "Hotel Boubenoff" began to represent every department of the great fair in its vicinity. Pots, kettles, and portable stove, from the metal quarter; plates and dishes from the earthenware; tumblers and water-bottles from the glass; knives and forks from

the cutlery; tea from the Chinese; mattresses and leather cushions, wooden bowls, and jars for water from the mountain streams, together with groceries, &c., were scattered about in picturesque confusion. Nor was the commissariat neglected; and an adequate stock of provisions, wine, London porter, and other necessaries was duly provided.

It must not be supposed that in abandoning all control over the architectural design of our gallant bark that the necessary work was pushed on with greater vigour, or that the office of surveyor became a sinecure; on the contrary, a perpetual surveillance was indispensable, and an occasional bullying imperative to insure its completion by the time agreed upon, and for which all our preparations were made.

Our German acquaintances and others, whose lengthened experience of Russian workmen, and the faithlessness of Russian promises, entitled their opinions to respect, assured us that we should be disappointed if we expected to get off on the day we desired. It was therefore with some feelings of triumph on the appointed evening of the 15th that we stepped on board the craft which was to carry us two thousand miles down the mighty Volga.

On drawing up the agreement it was necessary to mention the names of all the men engaged for the voyage; and their passports, which we received, being rather bulky, were handed over to the keeping of

André. On mustering the crew one was discovered to be absent, and on further investigation we found that the missing individual was no other than the principal steersman, who was, in fact, the most responsible and important personage of the whole.

On making inquiries we learned that he had abandoned his intention, if he ever had any, of accompanying us. Having succeeded by trickery and deception in obtaining his passport from André, he now stood in the next boat to see us off, wishing us no doubt a prosperous passage, and perfectly content with the amount of profit he had made out of the affair. The feeling of having been duped is never agreeable, but in this case the presence of the deceiver added insult to injury; and to be thus coolly treated with impunity before a crew of whose character we were ignorant, might, and in all probability would, have led to subsequent annoyance.

No time, therefore, was left for parleying; so I sprang suddenly to the place where the delinquent was standing, caught him by the throat, and dragging him into the boat, ordered the crew to push off, and thus fairly took my man prisoner.

Enraged at having been so summarily dealt with, he was inclined to be violent, and showered forth volleys of oaths and maledictions, of the nature of which we were then in blissful ignorance. His gesture and voice, however, were sufficient to prove, that neither the soft tones of civility, nor the gentle notes

of persuasion, were flowing from his lips; and thinking a further demonstration of firmness necessary, I stepped into the cabin, and drew forth a strong chain, which had been purchased for a very different purpose. The effect was magical; the ominous sound of the jingling links had reached his ear, and ere its size or strength could be seen, he was stretched, a prostrate slave, kissing my feet; and, in abject terms, imploring pardon, while but an instant before he had loudly threatened revenge.

Thus far all was well: a beneficial effect had been produced on the crew, and to a certain extent our feelings of indignation had been appeased. We had at first determined to take him to Astrachan "nolens volens," but a very little reflection led us to change this plan, as by it we should certainly have inflicted more trouble on ourselves, than punishment on him; for in this case the gaoler's position would have been more perplexing than the prisoner's. So the bright idea of inflicting a fine having occurred, we ascertained the amount required to hire another pilot in his place, which sum he gladly paid, and being put on shore some versts from Nijni, he had time in the solitary walk to reflect on his dishonesty; and we had the consolation of hoping that the lesson was not entirely lost on him. Thus terminated our first adventure on the Volga.

As two of the gentlemen who had accompanied us from Moscow to Nijni had decided on a trip to

Kazan, we offered them a passage to that place; and as they were too good travellers to be influenced by trifles, they accepted our invitation, and submitted with cheerfulness to the inconveniences necessarily existing in the sleeping department of the boat, fitted for two, when that number was doubled.

Calling our combined ingenuity into play, we contrived, by placing boards on a level with the opposite benches of the cabin, to make one large berth, into which we crept, through the upper half of the narrow door, and lay, like soldiers on a bivouac, with our martial cloaks, viz., macintoshes, wrapped around us.

Early on the morning of the 16th, we stopped at the small village of Rebatki, about fifty versts below Nijni, where the passports were examined. The morning was beautiful, and the air exhilarating: the broad stream lay stretched before us, silently carrying its ceaseless flood towards that sea which is ever receiving the swelling waters by countless channels, but giving them off by none.

Now, for the first time, we examined with attention the appearance of our crew; and a wild piratical-looking set the majority of them were. Bushy whiskers, beards, and moustaches, almost concealed their grim visages, while the hair, worn long, was cut with mathematical precision, in a line with the chin. On their heads were caps of fur, or sheep-skin; a shirt and a pair of trousers of cotton, with the bottoms of the latter confined by coarse bandages, in the

place of stockings; and the feet encased in *laptyi*, a kind of shoe, made of matting. A large sheep-skin coat, used at night, or in cold weather, in addition to these, constituted their entire wardrobe.

There was no great expenditure of time in preparing their breakfast. A large wooden bowl being dipped into the river, some jet-black bread, broken into pieces, was thrown into the water it contained, and a little salt having been sprinkled over, each in turn helped himself, with a wooden spoon, to a morsel of the contents. Scanty as was this repast, they did not forget to cross themselves, and bow many times, while uttering a short prayer or thanksgiving before commencing the frugal meal, concluding it also with the same ceremony. Their dinner and supper consisted of the like simple fare, and was only occasionally varied, by eating the bread and salt dry, and sipping the water alone with their spoons, each adhering to his turn with the same regularity. When we afterwards gave them apples and cucumbers, of which the lower orders in Russia are all passionately fond, they quite luxuriated, enjoying the treat much more than any alderman ever did the greenest fat of the most corpulent turtle.

As both stem and stern of our boat were pointed, a square sort of stage was built at each end; which, projecting over the gunwales, considerably increased the accommodation, and in the bows formed the sleeping-place of half the men, while the other half were rowing. That over the stern was a convenient

place for the pilot. On it also André established his kitchen, and subsequently when we took to purchasing live stock, a poultry-yard. Beneath it was a space of which we made an ice-house, ice being a luxury everywhere found in abundance on the Volga. The peasants store it in a deep hole dug beneath a large shed, and here they keep their milk, meat, or other perishable provisions in the hot season.

Small villages were passed on the right bank every few versts; while on the left, being low and subject to inundations, few objects were observed to vary its general monotony: the monastery of Macarieff being an exception. Its domes and towers, seen for some distance before reaching them, were highly picturesque, while this part of the river, becoming very broad and land-locked, has the appearance of a beautiful lake.

On beholding these battlemented monasteries, the mind is carried back to those days when the monks, true members of the Church militant, had to defend themselves against the common enemy of their country and their faith. Macarieff, from its vicinity to Kazan, was constantly exposed to the attacks of those Tartar hordes, who carried devastation into the very heart of Russia, shaking the power of the Czars to its foundation, and threatening, at times, to overturn it altogether.

Nothing tended more to sustain the spirits of the people, and encourage them in persevering efforts to

defend their country, than the resistance made from time to time by these monasteries; and which, when successful, was attributed to a miraculous interference of the Almighty. The patron saints were, however, sometimes caught napping, and this was the case at Macarieff, celebrated for its riches and splendour, which the Tartars attacked about the middle of the 16th century, and entirely destroyed.

Opposite to Macarieff is the romantically-situated village of Isadi. Here we landed, and a neighbouring hill promising a good view we mounted to its summit, and there a lovely and extensive prospect opened to us. The majestic Volga lay at our feet, calm and unruffled, save by the boatman's splashing oar: for many a long mile it could be traced in its eccentric windings; while on its silvery bosom lay hundreds of craft of all shapes and sizes; some huge-looking vessels with wide-spreading yards and great square sails flapping pettishly against the tall black masts as if impatient for repose;* others skimming over the surface by the united efforts of their crews, who, despairing of catching a favourable breeze, had attached long ropes to their barks, and towed them with measured pace along the bank: here a pert little boat dashed saucily on, there a lumbering barge floated lazily by. Beyond, the eye took an immense range, now over thickly-wooded country, now over extensive plains, until the earth's soft green, subdued

* In nautical language a sail is said to be "asleep" when so full of wind as not to move.

by distance, melted into the pale blue of heaven, and left scarce a line to tell where the one began or the other ended.

Loath to tear ourselves from this charming scene, we lingered until the sun began to sink low in the firmament; we had told the boatmen to drop gently down the stream, and pick us up some little distance below the village. Thinking to make up for lost time we walked briskly along the river's bank, but on arriving at a spot whence some distance down the stream could be seen, we were disappointed at catching no sight of the hoped-for craft: the dusk of evening had already commenced, and we knew that our two companions would be getting anxious for our return. We retraced our steps to the village, but on arriving there, no signs of the boat appeared, so setting out again, it was not until after walking several versts that we heard loud calling, which proved to be our friends, who had begun to think us lost; the boat had entered a little bay, and was thus hidden from our view until close in its vicinity. If we had had a long walk it was not devoid of interest; for we had beheld a most glorious sunset.

And now we dance merrily on, the boat sweeps past objects indistinct in their outline, for the deep shades of evening are on them; here and there a light appears as we dash by a village; and the sound of the oars is drowned in the boatmen's song, which alone breaks the stillness of the night.

CHAPTER VIII.

Rechievahs—Kosmadimiansk—The Tchouwasses—Their Marriages—Tcheboksar—Character of the Scenery—Anticipations—Approach to Kazan—An Uncomfortable Drive—Reach Kazan—The Gastinnoi Dvor—The University—The Streets of Tartar Town—The Kazan Tartars—Rendezvous of Siberian Exiles.

We reached Vasil very early on the morning of the 17th, and had our first experience of marketing, having purchased some chickens. This small town, situate at the junction of the Sura with the Volga, is devoid of particular interest: there were many boats lying at it, and the market was tolerably good.

On leaving Vasil, we passed several *rechievahs;* immense barges, resembling floating towns, which are peculiar to this river, and with which all travellers have been struck. They are warped up by means of horses attached to an immense capstan, two anchors with strong cables being alternately thrown out ahead from a heavy boat constructed for the purpose. There are as many as fifty or sixty of these horses working at the same time, and about a hundred and fifty on board: those we saw at the capstan were four abreast. The progress of the barges is exceedingly slow, several

months being occupied between Astrachan and Nijni; but as there are usually three or four others attached to this towing barge, the quantity of merchandise transported by them is immense. We went over one at Nijni, which we found to be a hundred and fifty paces long. When they arrive, the little horses are sold at the fair; but the work is excessively hard, and they are usually in indifferent condition on reaching their destination. Steam-tugs are rapidly superseding so clumsy and tedious a method; and probably ere many years elapse, this species of the Volga towing-barge will only be known as a thing of the past.

Between Vasil and Kosmadimiansk the scenery is varied, and everywhere beautiful. The windings of the river resemble a succession of lovely lakes; the oak and other trees which flourish in a rich soil and temperate climate, thickly covering the high right bank, and displaying every shade of green in their foliage.

In the afternoon we reached the small town of Kosmadimiansk, which, as seen from the water, is picturesque. Here we took a solitary stroll, and after walking about two versts, reached an elevation quite overhanging the river, and commanding it in both directions. Zigzag lines of light divided irregularly the flat country to the north, the glistening stream of a tributary, creeping insidiously towards the greater flood; while to the south appeared the higher lands forming the right bank of the Volga, diversified by hills and valleys, forests of oak, and

smiling fields, pretty generally cultivated. On rejoining my companions, we partook of sterlet soup at the little inn, an epicurean dish which all pronounced to be excellent.

Odd-looking fellows as our boatmen were, they seemed good-tempered, and worked well. The external signs of religion were manifested many ways: thus we never arrived at or departed from a town, but the whole crew might be seen reverently bowing and crossing themselves.

We had now reached a district inhabited by two curious races of people, — the Tcheremisses and Tchouwasses. Living in the same vicinity, resembling each other in manners, customs, dress, and even religion, and totally differing in all these from the Tartars or Russians around them, they nevertheless exist as much isolated from each other as from those more widely separated by character and habits. Prosper Thomas says of the Tchouwasses, "Pagans in religion, they have many superstitious ceremonies; but having been persecuted by the priests, they make a pretended adhesion to the Russian Greek church, and the consequence is a jumbling together of pagan rites and Christian forms, producing an unintelligible compound. Their priest is at the same time a sorcerer, and consulted as such in all the important events of life. He informs them what god they ought to conciliate, and how; orders them to sacrifice a horse, a cow, a ewe, or some kind of fowl, bought at the price

asked by the seller; for by omitting this last precaution, the sacrifice would remain without result. The baptised Tchouwasses when ill, go first to their own priest (*Jomsa*), and if they are not cured by him they proceed to the nearest church, and carry a candle to the *Russian God*, and to St. Nicholas. They believe that a man rich in this world will be equally fortunate in the next, and that he will follow the same occupation or profession. According to them, all the dead, young and old of both sexes, assemble together in seven cemeteries, passing from one to the other singing and playing upon divers instruments, and celebrating marriages, but in such a way that living men cannot see them, while they are visible to horses and dogs. Should a man, or any other animal, encounter them in their course, and fail to keep out of their path, he dies, unless the spirits are appeased by a sacrifice." They bury with their dead the principal implements of the calling of the deceased, also a pipe, tobacco, flint, and steel. Whether in summer or winter, the body is drawn to the grave in a sledge, which is afterwards thrown into a ravine, and never again used.

The Tchouwasses purchase their wives; but they never marry girls of their own villages, considering it disgraceful and unlucky to unite themselves with maidens whom they have always known. The parents arrange the matches, and try to find wives for their sons whom they had never before seen. It is

only when the bride is introduced into the house of the bridegroom that the father draws the veil off in which she is covered to her feet, and says to his son, "Behold the light. Good fortune attend you in bread and in children." Authorities disagree as to their origin, some supposing both the Tcheremisses and the Tchouwasses to be derived from the same stock, viz., the Finnish family; while others contend that the former are of Turco-Tartar derivation.

About seven o'clock on the morning of the 19th we landed at Tcheboksar, a town surrounded by Tchouwass and Tcheremisse villages. It is a place of some importance, having no less than twelve churches and a monastery, built in 1554, in which are about twenty monks. Most of these edifices are out of repair, an unusual circumstance; and as the river is here rapidly encroaching, some, already in a tottering state, were daily threatened with total destruction.

There are two hotels, and in one of them we took breakfast, which, considering we were in a remote provincial town, was not badly served.

It was a grand fair day, and the place was full of people in their holiday costume. We mingled, interested spectators, in the crowd, among which were many Tchouwasses. The women wore long white dresses embroidered in black or other colours, breast-plates covered with coins, and immense earrings, loose white trousers, confined below the knee by a

coarse black bandage, and *laptyi* of matting. The head-dresses consisted of a handkerchief, into which the hair was gathered. The young girls had no covering to the head ; the hair was plaited, and hung in long braids behind. Some of them had blue dresses over white.

Tcheboksar, built partly on the slope of a hill and partly in a valley, is seen to the greatest advantage a verst or two lower down the river, whence, taken in connection with the surrounding country, naturally fine, its many domes and cupolas have a charming effect.

On approaching Kazan the character of the right bank changes : the land is higher and more undulating ; numberless beautiful valleys opening to view, and displaying little villages with their churches, now standing boldly on the river's brink, now retiring to a distance. We passed many barges towed by steamers, the sight of which always caused a kind of commotion in the crew, as steam is held in no great estimation by the Volga boatmen, who complain that their wages for a voyage from Astrachan to Nijni have been reduced from fifty to twenty-five roubles since its introduction. We left Nijni with a young moon ; the weather continued bright and clear, the days warm, and the nights mild. Each succeeding evening brought a magnificent sunset, giving to the river and the scenery a rich and gorgeous colouring, while a few

hours later the moon, stealing out of darkness, threw her pale, modest light around, changing the warm luxurious clothing of the earth for a chaste garment of silvery whiteness.

Petersburg, Moscow, and Nijni, each in its turn, had raised high expectations, and each, with its own peculiar charms, had satisfied our hopes; but our thoughts flew to Kazan with a different feeling: there was more of mystery, more of imagination, in their vague longings. With an emotion, then, akin to joy, we heard announced, ere we had emerged from our little cabin, on the morning of the 19th, that our boat was fast approaching the looked-for city.

Kazan, the child of Eastern birth, the abode of that once restless tribe whose life was spent in war, where heroic deeds and valiant acts were the rule, and exploits of daring boldness were often twined with generous sentiments: Kazan, where a Tartar chief, tearing his wandering children from their desert waste, founded his kingdom, and gave them a settled home. To live, to breathe, to move amidst the descendants of this race; to explore this town coeval with the epoch when they gave up their wild roving life to dwell within a city's walls, may well have excited thoughts which mounted almost to the regions of romance. But the broad mask of ideality too oft conceals the sorrowful countenance of truth, as the smile may hide the breaking heart, or as

the fresh bloom of the apple on the Dead Sea's shore covers the black dust of its withered core.

The early morning sun had roused all nature into life; a refreshing breeze, borne from the balmy south, swept gently over the eddying stream, kissing with playful sportiveness its bright waters, and throwing them into many a dancing ripple. Crews of passing boats, relieved from their toil, spread the wide sail to the favouring wind. The patient fisherman, in his tiny skiff, watched the floating mark which told him when hungry fish had seized the tempting bait. The merry voices of children came stealing from the river's bank; and the sound of the village church-bell rolled solemnly along, to lose itself upon the distant waters.

But what is it to which all eyes are turned, standing like a giant on the edge of that vast plain which holds in one hand the Volga's mighty flood, and in the other grasps the ice-bound regions of the North? Is that Kazan? the object of our dreams, which pictured mosques and graceful minarets? Yes! yes! it is. But another race has triumphed, and the Russian Eagle holds in his iron claws the crescent, sacred symbol of the Moslem's faith.

High above the Kremlin's walls, on that spot where the Khan Mahmet placed the citadel, which afterwards grew to be the capital of his new-formed kingdom, could now be seen the green domes of the first

Christian church built in this Tartar town, surmounted by the golden cross. Other lines of buildings, too, were there, which told us that we gazed upon a Russian city; and all our hopes of Oriental architecture soon vanished "like the baseless fabric of a vision." Nevertheless, the view was not without grandeur, and we looked on it in quiet admiration until roused by the boat grating on the sandy shore.

To land and mount upon a rude "Teléga" was but the work of moments. Off! off! we go, across hillocks and into holes, bored by the eddies of the rushing stream, which covers in the spring the ground we now traversed. Our driver stuck at no difficulties, acknowledged no obstacles, but like the adventurous Yankee accepted only the motto of "Go a head." Thus for six long versts we submitted our bodies to the tender mercies of the rudest of all rude vehicles, over the roughest of all rough roads, drawn by the spiciest of all spicy little horses, and driven by the rashest of all rash "yamstchiks." There was a mischievous twinkle in that young dog's eye which seemed to feed with joy upon the efforts which we made to bring our bodies to an equipoise, and a roguish smile upon his lips, as he suited his supple frame to the accustomed jolt, which threatened to dislocate every joint of our less pliant limbs. No inexperienced mortal, however shrewd, could guess

the variety and combination of motion and position imparted to the teléga under such circumstances. Consisting of a couple of boards resting on the wooden axles of the fore and hind wheels, one of the latter was sometimes in the air, while that on the same side had descended into a deep rut, extricated from which the very opposite occurred, while at the same instant a knowing pinch imparted by the two planks on which we sat seemed to warn us to neglect no precautions for our safety. The jolting, rattling, and twisting drive of that morning was our first experience of a Russian teléga.

Passing a small village and a pyramidal monument* near it, erected to the memory of the Russian soldiers who were killed in their last battle with the Tartars, which reduced a kingdom to a province, and changed the princes who had formerly been vassals into the lords and masters, we entered the city, and glided so quickly and smoothly over the wooden pavements, that, by comparison, we began to think the "teléga" a delicious travelling carriage. The German proprietor of the "Hotel Jarof" stood at his open door, as if to welcome us.

There we took breakfast; at which, after flirting with fish, paying delicate attention to a chicken, and making a serious affair of a mutton-chop, we felt more

* Mr. Oliphant makes a singular mistake in describing this monument as "a curiously-fashioned little mosque," and an "unpretending Tartar edifice."

comfortable. Turn not up your eyes, gentle reader! Go, take a five-mile ride fasting in a "teléga," over a rough country, and you would feel hungry too. We now buckled on our armour, and with a certain amount of self-importance, which a good breakfast often imparts, we went forth like knights-errant in search of adventures.

First, then, to the bazaar—there was plenty of life and movement, but it was principally Russian. The Muscovite merchant of the third guild sat amongst his wares, precisely the same individual as his brother of Moscow; the same soldiers were there, only considerably thinner, as were seen at Petersburg; the same "moujiks," as were found everywhere, but mingling with them Tartars and others in sufficient numbers to produce variety. But what gives the greatest interest to the "Gastinnoi Dvor," is an old Tartar tower which raises its venerable head in the midst of the newer buildings around, and seems to look upon the little upstart shops in silent sorrow. This tower, with one in the Kremlin, are the only remains of Tartar architecture in Kazan.

In the principal streets we found the unexpected luxury of "trottoirs." Unrestored houses ravaged by fire gave here and there a desolate appearance to the town. The churches, of which there are a great number, are less brilliant in their outward decorations, and the style of architecture is more varied, especially in the belfries, than in most other Russian towns.

We made our way to the Kremlin, a citadel enclosed by a strong brick wall, flanked by thirteen towers, of which two are of greater height than the others. It contains the three principal churches, the governor's and archbishop's palaces and private chapels; barracks and Government offices, and, more interesting than all, the fine Tartar tower of "Sumbeka."

In the town are various other public buildings; a military hospital; an institution established by the present Empress, for the education of the daughters of officers at the expense of the State; a pretty theatre and assembly-rooms. The university, of Grecian architecture, is, however, by far the most imposing building in Kazan. A professor of the Oriental tongues is attached to it, and those pupils who display the greatest talent in these languages, become objects of special interest to the Government. They are sent to travel in the East, and are even provided with the costumes of the countries in which they sojourn, at the expense of the State, in order that they may acquire the appearance, manners, and bearing of the people. Educated in other points with extreme care, they become the clever agents and emissaries of the Emperor, holding consular and diplomatic appointments.

The Russians having appropriated the best parts of the city to themselves, the Tartars are forced into a suburb. This varies in appearance but little from an ordinary Russian town, and being unlike those of

Crim-Tartary where the houses are but blank walls externally. We strolled through its streets, in most of the little windows of which might be seen flowers prettily arranged, signs of gentle thoughts and refined tastes.

Shabby-looking mosques, with diminutive minarets, were there, evidences of a depressed religion. The men where dressed in long flowing robes with loose sleeves, and wide pantaloons tucked into high morocco boots, and these again encased in slippers, and with shaven heads, covered with the *bourik* (a velvet cap with deep band of fur), or by the more stately turban. The costume of the women resembles that of the men, save in the elegance of their form and material, closely veiled, that no gaze of passing man might catch a glimmer of their radiant beauty; but yet no veil can hide that glance of sparkling eye which, like a sunbeam, shoots between its folds, and renders the lustre dim of those large breastplates with curious coins arranged. These were but few; but others of a lower class would let the mysterious veil escape, and show features of a comely form.

The Kazan-Tartar walks erect, with that proud step which indicates a soul superior to the cringing slave. Cast one look upon his countenance, regard his forehead, and you are at once satisfied that he is of the highest type of human organism. Conquered, he is not subdued, nor forced into meanness and deceit, as a lower class of intellect would be. He is

full of honour, regarding his promise given as a bond too sacred to be broken. His clear black eye and fine features at once impress one with the idea of honesty and candour. We conversed with several at Nijni, through our young friend the German merchant, who gave us some general ideas of their character, gained from personal experience. They are benevolent and hospitable, and in their love of truth form a happy contrast to their Russian masters.

They are all engaged in some pursuit, and the manufactures of Kazan are celebrated throughout Russia. Their embroidery on leather is exquisite; some of it displayed at Nijni was exceedingly beautiful. We entered the principal mosque, which was plain in the extreme, having a small gallery above the door; it was, however very clean, and the floor was spread with carpets of divers colours.

Having had a letter of introduction to a wealthy German merchant at Kazan, my companions availed themselves of a polite invitation to his villa, situated near the town, in a pretty country, which has obtained the name of Russian-Switzerland, but I preferred continuing my investigation of the city.

Returning to the Kremlin, I entered the cathedral, a Gothic edifice, erected in the middle of the sixteenth century. It contains a handsome silver-gilt tomb and canopy of Archbishop Gowrie, by whom the church was built. I ascended the high belfry just as the sun was setting, and thence had the most

extensive and lovely of the many beautiful views we had already obtained over the Volga and the surrounding country.

Not content with the number of large bells which these towers contained, they were now raising an additional one, weighing upwards of twenty-four tons.

Kazan is the last rendezvous of the Siberian prisoners, and it is after quitting this place that their real hardships begin. The winter is intensely cold, and as these poor creatures are seven months on their journey, few escape being subjected to its rigour; and in addition to this terrible exposure, they are badly fed and housed, when they reach their resting-places, not from the fault of the Government, but from the systematic corruption which exists amongst all classes of the officials, and which, in these remote districts, far removed from the "surveillance" of the central power, is practised in the most shameful manner. These wretched exiles have no appeal, and thousands of them sink beneath their accumulated sufferings, victims of this gigantic villany.

CHAPTER IX.

Leave Kazan—The Kama River—Imperial Policy—Nicholas and the Church—Simbirsk—Karemzin's Monument—The Church always conspicuous—A Wilder Region—Russians Bathing—Our Servant André—Life on the Volga—The Boatmen's Songs—Khvalynsk—Volsk and the Italian Boy—Russian Capacity of Endurance—Saratov—An Encounter with Officials—Interference of the Military—A Triumph.

WE embarked at eleven o'clock at night. The wind was contrary, and our crew preferred towing to rowing, which the bright moonlight enabled them to do. Our cabin had been comfortably arranged, and, for the first time since leaving Nijni, we, as the sailors say, "regularly turned" in for the night. We had said farewell to our two agreeable companions, who intended, after remaining a few days at Kazan, to return to Moscow and Petersburg.

The moonbeams pierced the open sides and cracked roof of our little dormitory, but the atmosphere was too mild to make such things of consequence. The soft melody of the rippling waters, and the gentle whispering of the breeze, lulled us to that sweet

dreamy state when imagination, in her fitful play, skips from radiant scenes of present bliss to joyous days of youthful years, and clothes each thought in fancy's brightest hues.

The morning of the 20th was bright and clear, the wind, though refreshing, came from the south, and our men still continued to tow. Fair breeze or foul we sped glibly on. We jumped on shore, and dashing into the river, struggled with its waters, and then swam back to the bank, but found that our clothes were some hundred yards above.

Refreshed by our bath, we walked along the right bank, overhung by an alabaster cliff. What would not sculptors have given for those scattered blocks, which here lay useless? On some of them we observed the impressions of fossil fishes. Pure springs of water gushed from these rocks, with a draught of which the Gods' choice nectar could scarce compare.

We now reached the "embouchure" of the Kama river, where lay a number of those immense barges laden with the produce of China and Siberia shipped at Perm. By floating them down the stream this part of the voyage is accomplished with facility; but as they were bound to Nijni, they now waited for steamers to tow them up the Volga. By the Kama from Perm, the Volga to Tver, and thence by canal to Petersburg, Russia possesses water communication from the foot of the Ural Mountains to the Baltic

Sea. Between Petersburg and Perm, a distance of twenty-five degrees of longitude is embraced, and taking the circuitous route of the rivers, more than four thousand miles of country must be passed through, independent of that watered by numerous tributaries.

The Caspian Sea is also in communication with the capital by the Volga and the above canal, and this latter river could be united to the Don without difficulty and at small expense; in which case the Black Sea would be directly connected by water with all parts of this immense empire.

That the Government should have neglected to take advantage of these natural facilities, in a commercial point of view, is not astonishing, for there are too many instances of lamentable disregard to the development of the resources of the country and the people, to lead one for a moment to suppose that the policy of the Emperor is to foster and encourage them.

Commerce is too great a promoter of civilization. A vast industrial movement in connection with it would give to greater numbers of the people a certain amount of property, and property in the hands of the masses leads to a watchfulness of the acts of a ruler. The man who has accumulated by the sweat of his brow a little store of wealth, however small, clings to it with a venial fondness. That man is not to be torn from his home to swell the ranks of the

army, to be treated like a dog, and sacrificed to an enemy, without asking why and through whom all this takes place. This would not be a momentary feeling; the reasoning faculties once awakened, farther inquiries would be made, and before the test of reason the present system of Russia would fall.

All the exports of Russia now consist of raw produce: this is raised without ameliorating the position of the people. The landowners and merchants alone profit by it, and these latter, of the first guild, are nearly all foreigners. There is no class in Russia representing property in contradistinction to land, and those nobles who are great landholders have at present less influence than ever they had, not because their wealth and intelligence have decreased, but because the Emperor Nicholas, through a long reign, has drawn the clergy closer to him by every conceivable means, and especially by connecting all his great acts closely with religion. The priests have immense power in Russia, which can be exercised directly over a superstitious and ignorant people; thus they become the most valuable and necessary agents in such a case as the present war, by appealing to the passions, and exciting the fanaticism of the nation. The exercise of this double influence leaves the hereditary nobility almost powerless. We are aware that some privileges have been extended to a few of the serfs of the State, but this produces little effect on the great body of the people.

Near the small town of Keireva the river takes an abrupt turn, and here the view from the water is extremely picturesque. The church, with the usual domes, is on an elevation in the centre of the town; on the right far in the distance, and backed by a high range of hills, is the village of Karataefka; while to the left another line of hills stands boldly out. In this respect the country on the right bank has again changed: instead of a succession of undulations and small valleys, the country is intersected with well-defined hilly ranges. The land near the river is rich, and the alluvial soil reaches to the water's edge; while the same character is generally observed on the left bank, which distinguishes it higher up.

On the morning of the 21st we arrived at Simbirsk the capital of the province of that name. The town being situated high, we took a teléga, even more pristine in its construction than the one we had at Kazan. About half-way up the hill, we had a break down, but the little urchin who drove appeared quite accustomed to such accidents, if one might judge from the alacrity with which he was prepared with rope, and by the masterly way in which he patched up the crazy vehicle for another start. Reaching the top of the hill we ascended a high mound, whence one of those magnificent views of the Volga was obtained, of which we have several times before spoken.

Simbirsk is a tolerable specimen of a Russian

provincial town. The streets are wide, as usual: it contains some handsome houses and churches, a monastery, a good bazaar, theatre, and other public buildings. There is also a fine monument erected in honour of the Russian historian Karemzin. It consists of a colossal statue of Fame in bronze, standing on a pedestal of red polished granite, fifteen feet in height. In front of this is a niche containing a bust of this famous author, and on the other three sides are bas-reliefs in bronze, representing the principal incidents of his life. A great deal of wheat is exported from this town, which gives a certain amount of activity to the little port. The horses in the street-droschkies here struck us as being finer than any we had seen in Russia.

On the 22nd we touched at the village of Novodevech, remarkable for the number of its magazines of wheat. This district is of a chalk formation.

The views on the Volga are ever changing, ever charming. None of its scenery mounts to the sublime, but most of it is beautiful, with a great deal of the picturesque. As religion exercises so powerful an influence over the social habits of the people, even placing its stamp upon their manners—as it is the chain wherewith an empire is held in the bonds of slavery, and the weapon aimed at the independence of surrounding nations—so does the Church become a prominent feature in the physical appearance of the country. All that is picturesque on the Volga is

derived from the form, the colouring, and position of the churches. The villages built of wood, many of them admirably placed, would nevertheless be totally devoid of effect, from their sombre and monotonous colour, producing none of that play of light and shade, necessary to produce striking contrast; but the church with its domes, generally green, supplies all that is wanted, gives life to the sober shade of the surrounding houses, and character to the whole. For this reason a traveller, describing a hundred different views on the river, including the surrounding country, can scarcely avoid introducing into each the domes and cupolas of the churches.

It is this boldness of the Russian church which cannot fail to strike the passing stranger, for it is pushed forward politically, socially, and physically. It meets him at every turn: if he go into a town and shut his eyes, still there is the tolling of a great unmusical bell; opening them, he stands before the edifice itself: get to any part of the country, and the well-known domes are there; enter the peasant's cottage, the familiar picture of a saint stares him in the face; seek the inner room, and then another is ready to receive him. All this is policy: the Church is the great engine by which the State is moved, and the object is to keep it ever prominently and conspicuously before an ignorant people.

We have arrived in that only part of the Volga where the scenery puts on a boldness almost amount-

ing to grandeur, and where every few versts a fresh view is opened out more noble and interesting than the last. The hills are lofty, and the left bank changed in character has its heights also, which stand up in rivalry to, and often throw their opposite neighbours into the shade.

This is a region which evidently impressed a kind of awe upon André and the boatmen, all of whom frequently and devoutly crossed themselves. Neither were they without a certain degree of apprehension; for though the danger of an attack in this wild locality (wild only in comparison to the general scenery of the Volga) had gone by, the legends of daring robberies, and desperate adventures, of cruel murders, and frightful crimes, live on, and are repeated by the boatmen in lower tones, as they go through the Jigoulie pass. Nor from the amount of André's fear were we quite certain that all robberies had ceased in the locality, and so we brought out our six-barrelled revolvers to see that they were in proper working condition. The appearance of an armed guard-boat, however, put an end at once to all chances of adventures, had we hoped for them. The passports of our crew were here examined.

Amongst the pleasures of a trip down the Volga, the delicious bathing may be mentioned. Every morning we took a swim in the stream, now choosing a secluded spot on one bank, now a retired nook on another.

The Russians have a passion for bathing. At the villages we saw numbers, and at the large towns sometimes hundreds of men, women, and children, bathing at the same time, within sight of each other, though not exactly in the same spot. They are not extravagant in their expenditure on bathing-dresses, deciding, we suppose, that nature at such a time needs not the aid of superfluous garments. We have seen as many as fifty or sixty men jumping, in rapid succession, from the side of a vessel, ten or a dozen being under water at the same time, where they must have been hustling each other. They enjoyed it much, making the air ring with their merry laughter. They all swam like ducks. The Russian is a being who washes and yet is dirty, as he displays the forms of sanctity without being religious.

We reached Samara on the 23rd. It is situated at the most easterly point which the river attains, whence the view of the place is by no means prepossessing; but an unusual amount of bustle and activity were displayed on the shore, for the town is, in fact, rising into a place of importance. On landing we found it almost in ruins, from a fire which had occurred the year before, and which destroyed the best houses and many of the stores. As there was nothing to detain us of interest, we purchased our supply of provisions and proceeded on our voyage.

The old boundary-line of Europe and Asia passed across the Black Sea, from the Bosphorus to the

Straits of Yenikale, through the Sea of Azof, up the River Don, from which it crossed to the Volga near Sarepta, and ascended that river as far as Samara, whence it proceeded eastward, and then northward to the Ural Mountains. We had struck upon this line, which afterwards formed part of our route for five hundred miles.

About fifty versts below Samara is the village of Pechersk, the property of the Emperor. It is on the side of a green hill, and the streets are as thick with grass as the surrounding country. Here is a wooden church, the first we had seen, and, from all appearance, the inhabitants were not in too thriving a state.

Our servant André was a most useful personage: he cooked well, and was always willing to do anything for our comfort. He took great pride in calling himself a "bourgeois," spoke French with fluency and with an excellent accent, was extremely well mannered, generally intelligent, and possessed great tact, but was without education, and, in some things, extraordinarily ignorant. Being a native of Moscow he had a deep affection for that city, and had the very pardonable failing of believing everything belonging to it superior to that found in other places. Thus, when asked in the evening what he thought of the moon, he replied with enthusiasm, "Ah! messieurs, I think it by no means so beautiful as the Moscow moon." As our craft, from the many turnings of the

river, often suddenly changed her course, he, watching only the moon, without regarding the boat, found that the former appeared first over one bow and then over the other. This puzzled him excessively, and it was quite evident he regarded it as an extraordinary phenomenon; and, being ever ready to communicate information, he made a point of directing our attention to this wonder of the Volga.

André was a fair specimen of what hundreds of thousands, nay millions of Russians are, viz., naturally quick at learning anything they are put to; but, beyond that, never reasoning nor inquiring. A state of serfdom is totally incompatible with the development of the reasoning faculties. Born a mere machine, to do the bidding of another, being at the same time kept from want, the Russian peasant is never called upon to *think*: his mind is seldom directed to providing for the future, and he passes through life ignorant of the simplest truths of nature, while possessing a brain capable of a high amount of mental cultivation.

The Russian loves his beautiful Volga; he sings her charms in his popular songs; he speaks of her with rapture; and this is not surprising, for independent of the beauty inseparable from a fine river, there are a thousand changing scenes to call forth admiration. For ourselves, the hours flew too quickly by; fresh objects of interest constantly arose; strolling along the river's bank, sometimes amidst shrubs and

sweet-scented wild flowers, filling the atmosphere with a perfume more refined and delicate than I had ever before experienced; now meeting a body of sixty or seventy men towing a large vessel, and stepping in time to the measured tune of a monotonous song, occasionally reaching us from so great a distance, and by fitful snatches, that it seemed like some magic music in the air. Visiting villages, mingling with the people, entering their houses to make real or pretended purchases:—now watching the solitary fisherman, or enjoying the refreshing bath;—one day in Europe, and the next in Asia; exploring the large towns, strolling through their bazaars, examining their buildings, and studying the varied costumes of the divers races moving, but not mixing, together:—now mounting a hill-top, and embracing in one gaze scenes more extensive than any other part of Europe can produce, and now reclining in our boat, and revelling in the pleasures of ever-changing, always beautiful landscapes.

Thus passed our days; and the evenings were not less attractive. Lighted up by a brilliant moon, which sometimes catching the rosy-tinted rays of the sun already departed from our view, appeared red and full, but soon changed to her own pale complexion, and shed over the surrounding scenery a clear pure light which varied, but did not lessen, its loveliness,—our boatmen sang their wildest airs of brigandage, or poured forth softer strains in praises of their

beloved Volga. There was about these chorus-songs at such hours something peculiarly exciting. Their time was admirable, and the harmony indicated a just ear; the key was generally high, but being in the open air, that rather increased than diminished the spirit-stirring effect.

The small town of Khvalynsk, placed at the foot of a semicircular range of hills, looked inviting as we approached; but on entering it proved excessively dirty. The women, however, displayed an unusual variety of costume, but a succession of plain faces: though a slight improvement upon their sisters of the more central parts of the empire. Here, again, a recent fire had destroyed half the houses. The most conspicuous buildings were a number of magazines for corn, which is extensively grown here, and exported from, this district.

The wind becoming rather too high to make any way, either by pulling or towing, we moored for a couple of hours. The men divided their amount of rowing by the distances between certain villages, which in the winter, when the high road is on the frozen Volga, are post stations.

On the 25th chalk hills again appeared on the right bank, which, since leaving the Jigoulie, had resumed its average height; the left being low and sandy towards the water's edge, but covered beyond by thick brushwood: the river more contracted, and the current stronger.

The view of the village of Kersa, the church and belfry of which are yellow and green, and the neighbouring country, is exceedingly fine; hills after hills arise, thickly covered to their summits with trees and shrubs, the foliage of every tint, from the darkest brown to the brightest green.

We landed at Volsk, and entered its streets. What familiar sound is that which breaks upon the ear, calling up such varied associations? Can our senses deceive us? No! there he stands, the black eye laughing; the dark complexion, and the classic features of his race; there he stands, grinding away at his small barrel-organ; the very white mice, with their pink eyes, crawling about him, which we admired so much in childhood. There he stands, the wandering Italian boy, with the same costume, the same happy, handsome countenance, and as much at home on the banks of the Volga as in the streets of London. How this little rover ever reached so remote a spot remains a mystery, and we are glad it does, for we should have left him there with a saddened heart, had we known that he was but the victim of a tyrant, who had drawn him from his native land to steal the profits of his daily labour.

Volsk has some fine churches and barracks, with a town-hall, or rather a building for public offices, which, aiming at the chaste architecture of Corinth, had a dignified appearance at a distance; but on approaching, its imposing look was found to be really

an imposition; its columns were of brick, from which patches of the stucco had fallen, giving an air of meanness and poverty, quite out of character with its classic style Again, at Volsk, the everlasting vestiges of fire were found, although most of the houses were of brick and stucco.

We have been for some time in the land of water melons, on which the crew live, often making meals from them without even the addition of bread. We found them also very refreshing. The finest could be bought high up the river for five kopecs, or two pence, and lower down for half that price: the quantities of them were quite astonishing. Pyramids on the shore, boats almost sinking with the loads they carried, and thousands in the markets at once proclaimed them, what they really are during a certain season, the chief subsistence of the people. Considering the small amount of nutritive principle they contain, we could scarcely understand how our boatmen were able to keep up such constant and long-continued exertion. The characteristic of the Russian peasant to endure great fatigue upon a small amount of nourishment, probably encourages the officers of the army to rob the soldier of his rations; and when they have reduced his diet to the minimum, like the man who had just managed to teach his horse to live upon a straw, look upon it as extremely annoying that he should die precisely at the moment when the greatest amount of profit was to be made out of him.

We reached Saratov on the morning of the 26th. The landing-place was crowded with market-boats and vessels of various kinds. Taking a droschky, we drove into the town, which was cleaner, and had altogether a more respectable appearance, than usual. There were many comfortable-looking houses, the winter residences of nobles and merchants. The bazaar was good, and some of the shops had quite a civilized appearance.

This town was originally on the left bank of the river, but being subject to constant attacks from the Nomade tribes, it was removed to its present position at the end of the sixteenth century. A great extent of the neighbouring district belongs to it; the revenue from which, together with that derived from other sources, produces a large annual income. Its admirable position, and the richness of the surrounding land, combine to make it a town of commercial importance, and the busy appearance of the little port fully testified to this fact.

The church of the Assumption is curious, differing widely in architecture from all we had before seen. It has octagonal towers, and is surrounded by a balcony supported by pillars. It is divided into two stories, of which the upper is used in summer, and the lower in winter, for the performance of service; the interior has an air of unusual comfort.

We visited the Zavjenskoi Nunnery, in which are a hundred and fifty nuns. The building was simple and clean, the chapel pretty. There are about twenty

churches, an establishment for the education of the children of priests, assembly-rooms, and all the other usual public buildings.

Altogether Saratov left a favourable impression, resembling Moscow in miniature. Everything was to be obtained, and generally at a moderate rate. Important provincial town as this is, however, we searched in vain for a map of Russia; indeed, where anything is required connected with instruction or education, a sad falling off is found in all Russian towns. We replenished our stock of English porter, at ten rubles, thirty kopecs the dozen, or about two shillings and tenpence a bottle; an extravagant price, but which was not to be thought of when its beneficial influence in supporting the physical powers was taken into consideration. There is no doubt that good living enables the system of persons unaccustomed to the climate, to resist the influence of the miasma of the Volga, which produces intermittent fever. In our case it was necessary to take all the precautions possible, as, in consequence of our cabin having been so indifferently built, we were almost as much exposed as though we had slept in the open air. We lived quite luxuriously, obtaining beef and mutton at a fraction more than a penny a pound, chickens at threepence or fourpence each, and the richest milk at a penny a quart.

After remaining some hours at Saratov, we returned to our boat, and were astonished to find it in the

possession of some subordinate officials, connected with a department resembling the "Octroi" in France. When on board we demanded their business: they wished to know whether we had any foreign wine or brandy. We told them we had some of both, and offered to show our little stock if necessary; but this did not appear to be satisfactory. They asked a hundred questions, till, losing all patience, we ordered them out of the boat. This command was answered by the production of large brass plates, with Imperial eagles, and some unintelligible characters upon them. On the appearance of these badges, we brought forward our Foreign Office passport, and pointed, with an assumed air of importance, to the Royal arms at its top—having found this of some avail on previous occasions, for nothing has greater influence, upon ignorant officials, generally, than showing a document which they do not understand. Yet all appeared useless; so, making a last effort, we drew their attention to Lord Palmerston's coat-of-arms, but equally without effect, and then adopting his motto, "Flecti, non frangi," we assumed a more resolute manner, threatening to take them down the river, if they did not immediately quit the boat, hustling, but always taking care not to strike them; and finally we endeavoured to force the most offensive one into the cabin, to take him prisoner. This led to some half-a-dozen soldiers who were near, being called on board; and then, to our astonish-

ment, the important individuals walked on shore, under the protection of the military.

The boat was pushed off, and we glided down the stream, leaving a mob, who had collected near, to wonder at our temerity. The simple fact was, that these men were exceeding their duty, which was to prevent certain articles being landed. During our absence they had heard that we were strangers, and their wish was to extort money, which we were as determined to resist, otherwise we should not thus have braved the brass plates.

Saratov is beautifully situated, is surrounded by hills, and when seen from the river, either above or below, is exceedingly picturesque.

CHAPTER X.

Rovno—A dirty People—Doubofka—Drunken Men at Tzaritzyn—A Midnight Visit to Sarepta—German Honesty—Flight of Wild Fowl—A Don Cossack's House—An Oasis in the Desert of Dirtiness—A Kalmuc Camp—A Kalmuc Mother—The "Kibitka"—Kalmuc Costumes—Kalmuc Feeding—A Russian Fishing Station—The Evening Prayer—Commencing Difficulties—Leave the Boat—A Polite Postmaster—Arrive at Astrachan.

It was the policy of the Empress Catherine the Great to colonise the vast tracts of land in the vicinity of the Volga; and she wisely endeavoured, by conferring certain privileges, to induce Germans to emigrate to them. There are many villages composed of the descendants of these people, and Rovno, where we landed on the morning of the 27th, is one of them.

It was about eight o'clock, an hour at which we usually found the villages teeming with life; but here reigned the stillness of death. We saw a few women standing near their houses; but on our approach they retired, closing the doors after them. It is probable that the unexpected apparition of such a group as we formed might have caused some fear; for years, perhaps, had rolled by since any but inhabitants of the immediate vicinity had paid them a

visit. The village is on the left bank of the river, and in appearance rather disappointed us. As we had no opportunity of communicating with the people, we left without gaining any information concerning them.

During our voyage we had entered a great many houses of the peasantry, and they all presented the same amount of dirt. The Russians are decidedly a dirty, an excessively dirty people. We had an instance at a posthouse, in which a tumbler was so filthy that it was difficult to decide of what material it was made. This was pointed out to the postmaster, who immediately picked a piece of paper from the ground, which had probably been there for a month, and, using this instead of a napkin, he replaced the glass on the table for our use, with a smile of self-gratulation, as though he had really done a clean thing for once in his life.

On the 28th we landed, to do our usual marketing, at the small town of Kamashin, and returned to the boat laden with eight pounds of beef, a couple of dozen eggs, a large water-melon, and a great batch of potatoes, all for the large sum of thirty kopecs, or one shilling.

This evening we had a few drops of rain, the first since leaving Nijni, and, if we are not mistaken, since Petersburg; but in less than five minutes it had passed away, and left us to take our usual walk on the river's bank. Although we had

hitherto had no strong wind, it had generally been unfavourable, which made the work harder for the men, but they were always willing, and even happy. This evening, however, there was a treat in store for them; a fair wind came, our sail was set, and we swept bonnily along.

The Volga in the summer and autumn is generally infested with innumerable gnats, whose bite is nearly as bad as that of the mosquito, and excessively troublesome. From the annoyance, however, we entirely escaped; an immunity for which we were probably indebted to the dry clear atmosphere which so fortunately favoured us.

At eight o'clock on the morning of the 29th we brought up at the flourishing little town of Doubofka, a place rapidly increasing in size and importance, being the port through which all the traffic passes from the east to the country of the Don Cossacks, and by the Don, to which it has a tram-road, sixty versts long, to the Sea of Azof, whence it is distributed to other parts of the world. The products of these countries, for the supply of the districts bordering the Volga, pass also through it.

The landing-place was crowded with merchandize of all kinds, and on the river floated immense rafts of wood, to serve as building material for the inhabitants of the vast steppes to the north and south of the Don, which are entirely destitute of timber. There were also hundreds of cart-wheels, composed of a single

piece of wood, bent into a circle; these, with the addition of a few spokes, are used in this simple state. Indeed, there is not a particle of iron, even a nail, employed in making the carts of the country; the axles being of wood, an immense quantity of grease mixed with tar, is applied, to prevent combustion by friction.

Building was going on in every direction, mostly in brick; but we remarked one large magazine in stone. The principal church is handsome, being surmounted by no less than nine cupolas. There are the usual number of public edifices, none of which are remarkable; and the town is more distinguished for its business-like appearance, than for any elegance in itself.

The market was well stocked with fruit. We bought some excellent Burgundy pears, and a fine melon, for a kopec—not quite a halfpenny. Here we remarked a different kind of small boat from any we had before seen: it consisted simply of the trunk of a tree hollowed out, and resembled the canoes used by many savage nations. Numbers of them were on the shore for sale.

We arrived at Tzaritzyn in the evening; the neighbourhood of the landing-place being filled with drunken men. Not that this was any novelty; but here it appeared as though the whole of the population was drunk. One old woman was giving a man in this state a most unmerciful beating with a stick—

the first blows we had seen struck in Russia. The "moujik" is good tempered when under the influence of brandy; he generally gets affectionately drunk, and may be seen walking about with his arm around the neck of his equally-intoxicated friend; the last glimmerings of instinct leading them to adopt this method of mutual support, as most conducive to their safety.

Tzaritzyn, like Doubofka, is an active place of business, as it is the centre of traffic between the lower Volga and the west.

We reached the landing-place, about three-quarters of a mile distant from Sarepta, at midnight. Our time was precious, but we were determined not to pass so interesting a place without taking a peep at it, not then having fixed upon the route we should follow after quitting Astrachan. Taking André and the pilot, we started off, and after a quarter of an hour's walking, arrived in the town, to the no small astonishment of the watchman, for we must have looked, at that time of night, like a suspicious set of characters. We accosted this sturdy old guardian, who was marching about with an enormous brass hunting-horn hanging across one shoulder, intended for giving the alarm in case of fire or any other danger. His costume and manner were totally different from the Russian, and bespoke at once his German origin; and he was proud to announce himself as a member of this, the most thriving German colony in the country.

The appearance of the town also assumed an air of neatness quite refreshing. Rows of trees were planted in front of the white, clean-looking houses; and the modest little church proclaimed the inhabitants to be followers of a religion, which required neither gaudy colouring, nor useless form, to render it acceptable to the Almighty.

As we visited Sarepta at a subsequent period we shall have more to say about it: but we must not take leave of the good old watchman without recording the fact, that having offered him some money, as an acknowledgment for his civility, he refused to accept it; saying he had done nothing which deserved a reward. Here, in a country where the most trivial act rendered, drew a demand for a disproportionate payment—here we had found a man who had rejected a proffered offer, because he did not consider his services of sufficient importance to merit it. The old man knew it not: but he had conferred a pleasure upon us; which returns even now, years after the incident.

As the wind was still contrary on the 30th, most of our progress was by means of towing; during which process it was sometimes excessively amusing to watch the crew. On dry land, or in the river, it was all the same to them; they were an amphibious race, and were as much at home on the one as in the other. Being often obliged to get into deep water to avoid the fishing-stakes, and suddenly coming upon

holes, they would disappear one after another, or swim with the towing-rope attached to them. These little accidents never failed to elicit shouts of laughter and mockery from the men remaining in the boat, although they had to undergo precisely the same thing half-an-hour afterwards.

An immense flight of wild fowl passed over us to-day. It was one of those enormous migrations which we know take place, but which we seldom have an opportunity of witnessing. The atmosphere was blackened from their numbers; they were taking a southerly direction. The country on both sides of the river had become low and wooded to the water's edge; the scenery was not so fine as higher up, yet the weather continuing lovely, the pleasure of the voyage was scarcely diminished.

As we got still lower down the river a solitary pelican was occasionally seen, and everything indicated a thinly-populated country; but few villages were on the right bank, while to the left stretched those immense plains inhabited by the nomade tribes of Kalmucs and Kirghizes. Walking on the land we observed a great many young wild fowl, some of them having only just escaped from the shell. Our progress was much impeded by a strong wind for many hours on the 31st, but the men worked with great willingness.

If we could only have appeared at Westminster bridge with our boat and crew, we should have made

as great a sensation amongst the cockneys as the hippopotamus on his arrival at the Zoological Gardens of Regent's Park. It is astonishing how soon one gets accustomed to what seems at first strange and extraordinary. The wild-looking fellows now appeared quite in character with all around them, and to have seen men with shaven faces, and cropped heads, would have caused rather a disagreeable impression.

Early on the morning of the 1st of September we landed at the village of Vetlianka, inhabited by Don Cossacks, situate on the right bank, which here becomes rather higher. While in search of provisions we entered the house of a Cossack soldier; the man was not at home, but his good wife was baking bread, of which we purchased a loaf just drawn from the oven. Whether André's olfactory nerves were more sensitive than ours, we know not, but certain it is, that immediately after we had quitted the house, he made his appearance with a large piece of mutton pasty, which he was dexterously throwing from one hand to another, thereby indicating that it was rather too hot to be pleasant. This process caused a rich odour to fill the air, and led us to return, and endeavour to purchase the remainder of the savoury dish, which promised so good a breakfast. The Cossack's better half was, however, unwilling to part with the meal prepared for her husband, but a handsome premium upon the value, and a present of a dozen useless

empty bottles, was a temptation too great to be resisted.

The house of these decent people was a true oasis in the great desert of Russian dirtiness; everything was scrupulously clean, the seats, the table, the floor were white, from scrubbing; and even the beams above had undergone the same process. It is said that occasionally a child born, and brought up in the midst of vice, yet becomes conspicuous for exalted virtue; so this Cossack woman stood forth a bright example of cleanliness in the midst of the universal filthiness which surrounded her. In the neat little room where we had been received, hung the cap, sword, and musket, of the husband, and by their side a nice guitar, showing that refinement of taste accompanied the virtue said to be so near akin to godliness.

We should have endeavoured to ascertain something of the history of this couple could we have remained, but we were getting anxious to reach Astrachan, as the time intended for this part of our tour was rapidly passing by. We therefore reluctantly embarked, though thankful to have in our possession bread made with really clean hands. This was the only specimen of cleanliness and propriety we had met with throughout Russia amongst the people. The German colonies are not, of course, included in these observations.

We now began to see many Kalmucs on both banks of the river, and in their boats; in the latter

case the men were quietly squatted, enjoying their pipes, while the women did all the labour, especially the hard work of towing. In the afternoon we came upon one of their encampments on the left bank, which, proving too great a temptation to be passed by, we jumped on shore, and made our way towards it. A woman carrying water, on perceiving us, put down the vessel, and darted away with the rapidity of a young fawn. The camp consisted of eight or ten "kibitkas" (tents), in one line. Before them were playing a number of little olive-coloured naked children; who, after regarding us for an instant, as any other wild animals would do, shot into the open doors of the "kibitkas" like rabbits into their holes. At the same instant we were assailed by a host of mongrel curs, many of them wall-eyed, with a yelping and barking as though all the furies had been let loose upon us.

As the Kalmucs understood a little Russian, we told André, as a sort of introduction to farther acquaintance, to ask if they could sell us any fish or potatoes, neither of which, however, they possessed. Their replies to other questions were concise in the extreme: neither were our first efforts to play the agreeable very successful. Seeing a woman with a small baby in her arms, we touched her on the shoulder, upon which she turned round with a countenance indicative of strong fear; and when, pointing to the child, we held up some kopecs, she clasped the

infant to her bosom, with an expression of more intense agony than I ever remember to have seen before. She muttered some unintelligible sentences; but the look needed no feeble words to explain it. She imagined that we desired to buy her child, and all the holy impulses of a mother's love rushed to the heart, reflecting back to her face the natural language of profound suffering, to which the thought of losing her offspring had given rise. At last, however, I did manage, by insinuating the money into the hand of the young Tartar, to convince her that we had not the slightest desire to add a small Kalmuc to the other responsibilities of life. It was not, however, very flattering to our vanity, to have been thus taken either for a child-stealer or a slave-dealer.

Our next advance was scarcely more satisfactory. Having vainly attempted to entice a diminutive naked boy from the inside of a "kibitka," at the door of which we stood, by holding up a kopec to him, and displaying a variety of eccentric dumb motions, whereby we hoped to convey to his feeble intellect our desire that he should appropriate the small coin to his own particular use, we in an unguarded moment threw it towards him, when to our horror, instead of eliciting the expected amount of gratitude, the young nomade commenced a roar which, by comparison, would make the squalling of all civilized babies appear like music's softest notes.

By this time, however, the elderly part of the community began to perceive that we were not such bad fellows after all, and their confidence becoming contagious, soon spread to the juveniles, who, when they understood that something might possibly be got out of us, made numerous advances to attract our attention, and extract our kopecs.

We now entered several of the tents, and amongst them that of the chief, distinguished internally by having a bench raised about a foot above the ground, on which the old man sat. There were about a dozen men, women, and children squatted cross-legged in this tent. When we entered they were smoking and drinking tea, with mare's milk in it, from small wooden bowls. The vessel which formed a substitute for the teapot was about eighteen inches high, nine in diameter at the bottom, decreasing to four at the top: it was made of dark wood, and bound with four or five brass hoops kept quite bright.

The chief was seated cross-legged on a coarse rug spread on his rough throne; pieces of felt were here and there on the ground, which were occupied by the other members of the family, or visitors. The fire was in the centre, over which a tripod supported a large pot. Around the walls of the tent were some arms and domestic utensils. These "kibitkas" were of felt, supported on a latticed framework of wood, circular in form, with a conical roof, and a flap at the top, which, being thrown back, formed a chimney,

but could be closed if desired; a flap of the same material constituted the door.

The costume of the men and women was very similar. They wear loose trousers tucked into high boots, generally red; two long loose robes, the under confined at the waist by a sash, the upper free and flowing, with the sleeves larger and shorter than those of the under one; the cap is yellow and pointed in the crown, with a wide band of black lamb-skin. The dresses are not confined to any particular colours: some of them were in designs, and the shawl pattern appeared a favourite with the women. The men had their heads partly shaved, platting the hair which remained, and which fell beneath the cap. The women had two long braided tresses falling behind, and wore divers ornaments, generally of coins.

The females do all the hard work, while the men when not hunting, sit or lounge in their "kibitkas," smoking tobacco of a very inferior quality, of which both sexes are passionately fond. We saw a woman occupied weaving a piece of coarse cloth about ten feet long, and four wide.

The Kalmucs are not prepossessing in appearance, bearing the distinctive marks of the Mongol family; high cheek-bones, flat noses, broad features, with long narrow eyes, and dark olive complexion: they are small in stature, and bow-legged. The men ride well, being placed on horseback from early childhood.

In religion they are followers of the Grand Lama;

but whether any members of these tribes ever visit Thibet or Kounboum we know not. Should they have done so, they are doubtlessly duly impressed with the solemnity of the "Feast of Flowers;" but if they have not made the pilgrimage of the Lamasery, they probably envy the man who has a praying machine, wherewith to relieve himself from the responsibilities of his neglect. By-the-by it is rather a singular thing in these days, when we flatter ourselves that we have carried machinery to such a state of perfection, to find that these barbarians should have had machines, for aught we know a thousand years, wherewith to offer up prayers to their false gods. And there is a greater resemblance between the civilized and barbarous machinery than at first appears; for how closely is the former often connected with a worship quite as absorbing as that of the Grand Lama,—the worship of gold!

The Kalmucs in their diet take much mare's milk, and a great deal of animal food; looking upon horse-flesh as the most "recherché" of all dishes. They are very fond of tea, but are daily becoming more attached to brandy. They are divided into three classes, nobles, priests, and people; the priests have great influence. Each family occupies a tent, in which the men, women, and children sleep, without having any partitions. Their principal riches consist of cattle, horses, camels, and sometimes sheep, which they exchange for other necessaries. In the summer they

camp upon the banks of rivers, and in winter, when these are frozen over, they seek more sheltered localities, where pasture exists for their cattle.

In one "kibitka" we found a female and no less than six naked children; and in another a poor old woman nearly blind from ophthalmia, who appeared quite deserted.—Thence we continued our voyage.

Just before sunset we arrived at a temporary Russian fishing-station: here were some fifty or sixty men, and about a dozen boats. They had erected five huts, consisting of a rough framework, filled in with reeds, and the one roof which covered the whole was prevented blowing away by a quantity of sand thrown on it. The spot was well chosen for the purpose, consisting of a tongue of land stretching nearly parallel with the river, and having a creek behind of deep water, the head of which was divided off by stakes closely driven, and making a reservoir for the fish; the lower part forming an admirable little bay for the boats. As the wind was contrary, and the towing-ground bad, we determined to remain here for the night, and accordingly our boat was taken into the creek. When we landed we found the men just going to their evening meal of sterlet soup, and boiled skinned wheat, over which the floating oil from the soup was thrown. This was sumptuous fare to what our boatmen lived on.

It was a lonely spot, far from any village, and if André that night calculated the odds against us, in

case of attack, he must have had but little sleep; probably it was the first time any two travellers had ever slept at such a remote Russian fishing-station.

The evening was advanced; there was no moon, but the stars were giving an uncertain light. All our men had thrown themselves on their hard beds, and were wrapped in profound sleep; the stillness of the grave reigned around. The fishermen had all, I thought, retired to rest, for I had seen them in succession crossing—themselves before entering their boats.

I sat alone beneath the little verandah, in front of the cabin of our craft, absorbed in thought. Thought, which at such an hour, and at such a place, seemed more condensed, more intense, than at other times; the souvenirs of a thousand incidents, long since written on the tablet of my memory, but of which the ink had grown pale, now rose before me, bright and distinct; and I fell into a dreamy reverie. There was something very solemn, almost sad, in that deep stillness—it hushed one into frigid isolation.

At that moment a tall and venerable figure, with uncovered head, moved slowly and silently over the sand, and stopped near to our boat: the long white locks could be seen waving in the wind. The head was thrown back for a moment, as if to penetrate the mysteries of that beauteous firmament, thick set with myriads of stars, each throwing their rays millions of miles long on him, on that old man. He sank down on his knees; he then kissed the cold earth, and there

remained prostrate for many minutes; he rose again, and again gazed earnestly towards heaven, and fervently crossed himself. Once more his form lay stretched upon the sand; and then arising, two steps took him from my sight. I had been an unobserved spectator of the old fisherman's evening devotion. I threw myself on my couch, believing that that old man's silent prayers would be received as the outpourings of a sincere heart. On awaking in the morning we were twenty versts from the solitary fishing-station.

The river was now much broader, and divided by many low islands, covered with shrubs, into numerous channels; but the scenery had entirely lost that beauty which distinguished it above; added to which the wind had risen, and the men could neither row nor tow, our high cabin causing the boat to roll heavily, and we were at last forced to take shelter beneath the bank, where we remained six hours. A little lull enabled us again to get under weigh in the afternoon, but our progress was slight, and we had soon to stop.

The same kind of weather continued on the 3rd, and it was by threats only, that we induced the men to exert themselves. They were afraid that the boat would turn over; but with a wind against which they could make way by pulling, there really appeared no danger. By perseverance, however, we managed to reach the village of Seroglazinskoi, at which we moored for the night. And as the morning of the 4th ap-

peared more unfavourable, we determined to quit the boat in which we had passed three happy weeks, unaccompanied by a single "contre-temps" until the delays by contrary winds of the last forty-eight hours.

We could not, however, conceal from ourselves the fact, that, had we encountered bad and rainy weather for any number of days, our boat would have been exceedingly unhealthy, and even untenable. As it was I had already begun to feel debility, and dreaded the travelling in a teléga; but there was no alternative, and having collected our traps, we went to the post station.

We were very sorry to leave our craft, having contracted a kind of affection for it. The conduct of the men too had been unexceptionable; they had worked willingly, had shown great good temper, had amused us with their songs, and by a little present to them on leaving, we parted with their blessings.

On one side of a square, composed of straggling wood cottages, stood a larger building than the rest, but of the same material. On the outside of this was a board marked with the number of versts to the principal towns of the north and west. Within, on each side of the door, was a small room, one occupied for a variety of purposes, from a bedroom to a scullery. In a corner of this lay a book, with which we afterwards became very familiar, and pens and ink. The furniture of the other room consisted of a table, and some ricketty chairs, for the accommodation

of visitors like ourselves. Behind these rooms were a couple of dens, used for sleeping apartments.

A large yard contained two or three superannuated telégas, of which a number of fowls had taken undisputed possession, and a few others, in good repair, stood ready for the road. As we regarded the firm build and unyielding material of the latter, it required no great amount of prescience to decide what my already burning brain and aching limbs were destined to suffer. This building was the post-house of Seroglazinskoi.

We thought, in spite of the dirt around, that a few boiled eggs might escape its contamination, and we accordingly ordered some for breakfast. Rash fancy! there was nothing to indicate their being stale, but their taste was most revolting. They had been boiled in the dirtiest of all dirty water; and having left the remainder of our provisions on board, we were forced to content ourselves with dry black bread alone for our mela.

The postmaster was a polite, a very polite man; he was anxious to do everything for us, *only* as we had no "padaroshna" (an order for post-horses), he made us pay treble the fixed price, and take beside two telégas, one for ourselves, the second for André, and the portmanteaus; thereby giving us the benefit of expending exactly six times the amount we should have done. But still he was *amazingly* polite.

Having placed our two mattresses, cushions, divers

greatcoats and plaids, into the primitive conveyance, vainly hoping thus to soften in some degree the anticipated jolting, we started on our journey of ninety-three versts, or about seventy miles. Our route lay over a rough country, and sometimes on the edge of the river, and in the water two or three feet deep. We fortunately lost little time in changing horses, the cash we were paying being so great as to prevent even Russian cupidity from resorting to delay as a means for fresh extortion; but for the latter, without the all-important "padaroshna," we had no remedy.

Late at night we arrived at the ferry, and crossed to Astrachan, where, after waiting at the landing-place for an hour, we managed to get a "charette" to take us to the hotel; and thuse nded a day, the torture of which I shall never forget.

CHAPTER XI.

A Shocking Night—A Fever taken—The Town of Astrachan—The Fisheries—Russian Credulity—The Chief of Police—Prepare for Departure—An unfortunate Resolution—Monday an unlucky Day—An insensible Servant—The Polka Jacket—Sarepta—The Moravian Church—The Contents of a Garret—The Act of a Despot—An Evening with the Pastor—Farewell to Sarepta.

With whirling brain and burning body I sought my wretched bed, and struggled through that long night, endeavouring to shake off the idea that a thousand living things were crawling over me, an idea which I thought was but the offspring of a heated imagination. The morning came, and with the light evidence that what I had opined to be fancied horrors, and which had been magnified by the fever already commenced, were really the effect of the presence of a multitude of various insects, the rightful owners of the bed in which I was but an intruder. First came a light troop of skirmishers, in the shape of fleas, then regiments of earwings; battalions of wood-lice, succeeded by an army of Prussians.* Nor were the camp fol-

* Insects resembling a small cockroach, about five-eighths of an inch long, common to the east of Russia, particularly to Astrachan, are called Prussians, from having first made their

lowers wanting; a solitary spider marched over the battle-field, followed by a motley crew. Ugh! I am not a grumbler. No man should travel who cannot put up with inconveniences which must arise. I once slept in an Arab house in Palestine, composed of one apartment, in which were three companions and myself on the floor; an Arab family, and some mule-drivers on a kind of large shelf, beneath which were three or four horses, a donkey, and some fowls, while a cat prowled about at discretion. In a few hours of that night, an experience of fleas was gained equal to what is usually spread over the life-time of an ordinary man. Yet by comparison it was but a trifle to any one of those spent at Astrachan. In vain did we wrap ourselves in the chamois leather sheets we had with us; all was of no avail against such fierce assaults.

I had taken a continued fever, which, though not dangerous, was attended by extreme debility. It had lately appeared as an epidemic, and having come from the direction of Persia, was popularly called Persian fever. For ten days I was confined to my bed, but through the kind attention of Dr. Witt, a skilful German physician, and the still greater kindness of my friend, who daily braved with unflinching valour the disagreeables of a Russian kitchen, to

appearance about the time of the return of the Cossacks from the Seven Years' War. They, however, came from the east, and not from the west.

superintend the cooking of arrowroot and suchlike things for me, I was enabled, at the end of that time, to get up, and finally to drive about and explore the town and neighbourhood.

Astrachan, the last town upon the mighty Volga, before it loses itself in the Caspian Sea, is situated upon a sandy island. It is now merely the capital of a province of the same name, though once that of a Tartar kingdom, and some old walls and towers of its proud period still exist. Within the Kremlin stand the two principal churches, viz., those of the "Assumption" and "Saint Trinity," together with large barracks, military hospitals, and other buildings. In the town are many other churches, and amongst them a fine Armenian one, together with some mosques, the governor's palace, a theatre, and a hospital for the poor, built by a Russian of enormous wealth, who, in a time of scarcity, had bought up all the corn and resold it at an exorbitant profit; for this act he was banished from the town, but his wealth enabled him to get removed to Volsk, which most people would regard as a change for the better. This hospital was raised as a little expiation for the sin, and a slight acknowledgment to that class of people of whom he had starved so many to death

The streets of Astrachan have no pavement of any kind, being composed of deep sand, which, when there is any wind, and that is very often, rises in one dense blinding cloud of dust. Most of the

houses have shops, all of which have a dilapidated appearance, from the falling of numerous patches of stucco.

The population is between forty and fifty thousand, and being composed of Russians, Armenians, Greeks, Kalmucs, and divers other Eastern races, presented a more Oriental appearance than in any other town of Russia we had hitherto visited. All these people, excepting the military and officials, are engaged in trade, and on our arrival excited some curiosity to know what line of business we were in. André found it quite useless to assure his questioners that our only object was to see the place; for the fact of his denying that we had anything to do with commercial affairs, drove them to the conclusion that we had come upon a secret speculation to buy up some particular commodity or production.

The costumes of the inhabitants were as varied as the races, and these gave character and life to the place; otherwise, with its green-domed churches and tall belfries, it was much like an indifferent Russian town.

The fisheries of Astrachan are on a very extensive scale, and the exports from this source alone considerable. The first part of the fish secured is the spawn, which is taken from it immediately after being caught, thrown into a saturated solution of salt, and thence transferred into bags, through which the superfluous moisture is pressed. Thus pre-

pared it is known in commerce as *caviare*. The Russians are very fond of it, and in the houses of the rich take it, amongst other things supposed to create an appetite, before dinner with brandy or liqueur. The fish, after the spawn is removed, is salted and dried; and much glue is also made.

Silk is still raised, but not nearly to the same extent as formerly, the capital having been withdrawn and invested in the fisheries, which are much more profitable. There are numerous gardens and vineyards near the town, and various fruits are grown; the grapes are good, but the wine is of indifferent flavour. Each of the gardens is enclosed, and has in its centre a high stage, on which a boy is to be seen rushing about all day long to frighten away the birds.

We had an interview with the governor, a fine old general officer. He could speak neither French nor English, an unusual circumstance, but his daughter became our interpreter. He was kind and polite in manner, and, what was of more importance, gave us an order to the postmasters of his district, to furnish us with horses without delay, which we afterwards found of great service.

On descending from this interview we were astonished to find all the servants drawn up in a line to see us out of the house. This looked like a delicate mark of attention, but we flattered ourselves too soon. It appeared that the curiosity of the governor's house-

hold had been excited, and when to their inquiries André replied that the strangers had arrived neither on official nor commercial business, they jumped to the conclusion that we must be connected with some party of strolling actors. Teased by their importunities, André, giving way to a spirit of waggery, persuaded them they had guessed correctly, and said that one of the strangers had the power of walking on his head, and the other, being endowed with all the attributes of a bird, could soar through the air with equal facility. Thus, as the marvellous is ever more readily believed by the ignorant than the probable, André's story gained immediate credence; the tale flew from one to the other, and we were received with looks of wonder and admiration as individuals possessed of supernatural powers.

We also paid the chief of police a visit, who insisted on our taking luncheon, and produced some wines of the country for us to taste. He was a short fat man, a colonel in the army, had been in the campaigns of 1814 and 1815, about which he was fond of talking. He was full of jokes, in the midst of which it was quite evident he had an eye to business; for with all his tact it was not difficult to discover that he desired to get as much information as possible concerning our object in visiting Astrachan, and our intended future movements, in which we fully gratified him, for we had nothing to conceal. It was quite clear from this and other circumstances we

have already mentioned that Astrachan is far removed from the beat of tourists, who are there looked upon as belonging to a singular and rare variety of the human species.

As a great deal of valuable time had been lost, we made every effort to proceed on our journey; besides which I felt that nothing but a change of air would set me up after the fever, which had left much debility. We had intended, if possible, to make our way into the Caucasus; but no one could give us information about the means of accomplishing it, and all agreed that it would be attended with great difficulty, unless we took the route by the Don, and then turned to the south, on the great line of communication between Petersburg and those distant provinces. Feeling too weak to attempt anything in which unusual exertion was required, we reluctantly abandoned the proposed plan of taking a southerly route by the shores of the Caspian, and decided on travelling westward towards the Crimea and Odessa.

We therefore purchased a "tarantasse," a style of carriage well adapted to the roads, or rather no roads, of the steppes. The body was long enough for us to stretch at full length, and resembled a small boat used in China, and called a "tanka" boat: it has no seats, but over a layer of clean straw were placed matresses and cushions. The covering consisted of a large hood and apron of leather, the fore and hind wheels being

at a great distance from each other. Two long ash poles, forming the springs, supported the body, and their projecting ends carried the baggage. A seat in front accommodated André and "yamstchic." The former, looking to his personal comfort, had coaxed the man from whom the vehicle was purchased, to place a raised back on his side, so that he luxuriated in a kind of easy chair.

Thus far all went well: our carriage was ready on Saturday the 14th, and we announced to André our intended departure on the Monday following, at which he put on a most sorrowful expression, begging us to start on the morrow, or remain until Tuesday, which he argued would be much more agreeable to the "Bon Dieu," as we had chosen an unlucky day, and some misfortune would certainly attend us Being disinclined to make ourselves participators in the superstition which terrified him, we declined to alter our plans. Unfortunate decision. Had we then known the profound aversion and even dread of commencing a journey on that day felt by the Russians, we might have hesitated before venturing to outrage their deep convictions on the point, and thereby have prevented discomfort and annoyance falling on ourselves.

The morning of the 16th broke dark and gloomy; the "tarantasse" was at the door. We took a glance round our rooms to see that nothing had been left, and a shudder passed through our frame at the

thought of all the misery and dirt of Astrachan's best hotel. We had been obliged to look more closely after the baggage than usual, for a sort of gloomy absence had settled upon André, a stupid look had superseded his usual intelligent expression, and he appeared to be weighed down by a heavy spell.

A cold disagreeable wind swept up the sand of the streets as we walked towards the ferry, but it was soon beaten down by the rain which now commenced. A crowd of Kalmucs, who here follow the occupation of boatmen, lifted the carriage into a common boat, and on arriving at the opposite bank the same clumsy method was adopted to land it. But where was André? Alas! he had falled down in a state of stupor, dead drunk.

Verily Monday was an unlucky day for us. The posthouse was a short distance from the ferry: the rain was by this time pouring in torrents. The depressing atmosphere and morning's exertion had already exhausted the little strength I possessed, and things which in health would have been regarded as the merest trifles, or passed by unnoticed, now appeared magnified into difficulties almost insurmountable. But man's physical powers often increase under the necessity for exertion, and this was no time to fancy oneself an invalid. The horses were procured after a due examination of the "padaroshna," and an unusual alacrity shown on the production of the governor's order, with its large seal of office.

Our insensible servant was got on the box after great exertion, and by a limb at a time, the work having often to be done over again; for as fast as one part of the body was poked up another fell down. In this state he remained for twenty hours, in spite of the pouring rain, which, in most similar cases, would have had a restorative effect. It was quite evident that, in a fit of despair, he had poured down an immoderate quantity of brandy to render himself unconscious of the terrible vengeance in store for those who had thus wantonly defied the Fates by starting on a journey upon a Monday.

The distance between Astrachan and Sarepta is about four hundred versts, scarcely a tree relieving its dreary aspect, and the eye wandering over a vast sandy plain. Here and there was to be seen a solitary Kalmuc, pacing steadily along on his sober-looking dromedary, or flying over the ground on his active little horse. Now we came upon an encampment of these wandering people; now saw grazing in the distance their flocks and herds.

We passed through many wretched-looking villages, half buried in sand, where the inhabitants seemed occupied in a perpetual struggle to prevent the encroachment of this persevering enemy, if one could judge from the numerous pallisades and barriers erected to arrest its progress. The women sat at their doors with distaff and spindle, at one universal occupation of spinning flax thread. Amongst them

were displayed every conceivable variety of which the polka jacket is susceptible; and the belle who some seasons ago flattered herself that she came out in something "quite new," would have been shocked to find that she was only sporting, in a more refined material, the costume of a Volga fisherman's wife.

The route sometimes lay along the borders of the river, and at others struck farther inland; but however it might be varied in this respect, the change brought no improvement in the road itself, which was rough in the extreme, although we suffered little comparative inconvenience from it, as our "tarantasse" proved most comfortable. We could fully appreciate the advantages of the long ash poles over the more elegant spring, which would certainly have snapped in the distance of any single verst traversed at the pace we dashed over hillocks or through deep ruts.

At seven o'clock on the morning of the 19th we reached Sarepta, and entered the inn, which appeared, after that of Astrachan, like an Elysium. The rooms were scrupulously clean; the beds seemed inviting; our breakfast gave us a foretaste of what the dinner would be; and, above all, the interesting little town and its inhabitants at once induced us to remain twenty-four hours, as well to satisfy our curiosity as to gain a little repose, which, after three nights and days of jolting, was not unwelcome.

It was yet early in the day when we called on Mr.

Louser, the Moravian pastor, by whom we were received with warm-hearted kindness. He devoted himself to us for the day, showing us everything worthy of observation in the little town, and giving us much interesting information about its people.

Sarepta was founded by a party of German emigrants, who settled there in the time of Catherine the Great. She granted them many privileges and immunities. A large tract of land was bestowed on them, which is still held in common. They conduct all the affairs of the town themselves, without the interference of Russian officials or police, none of whom live amongst them. They are exempt from serving in the army, are lightly taxed, and are permitted to distil their own brandy, which is otherwise a monopoly of the Russian Government.

The town contains eleven hundred inhabitants, of whom four hundred are Moravians, as many Lutherans, and three hundred Russians and Kalmucs; these two latter classes being all labourers. The place consists of a large square planted with trees, and streets leading from it. A number of fountains at once distinguishes it from a Russian town; and all the best houses have water laid on by pipes. They have a remarkably neat appearance, and indicate not only a certain amount of wealth, but a refinement of habits in their possessors. We visited some of them, as well as that of the pastor; they were neatly furnished, and had an air of comfort

which was only exceeded by their perfect cleanliness.

The mustard of Sarepta is much esteemed throughout Russia; the proprietor of the manufactory is one of the oldest colonists, and has laid up a store of wealth by his industry. The mill was driven by a small steam-engine, and no less than three hundred thousand pounds of mustard are made and exported annually. There are also a brewery, a tannery, a distillery, and a manufactory for tobacco grown by the colonists. All the people are thriving—many of them wealthy.

The almshouses for aged women interested us much. These were replete with order and propriety, and everything was to be found which could conduce to the happiness or comfort of the inmates. All the people are educated, and the public schools were filled with clean well-behaved children. On going through them, one might have fancied oneself transported back to the "fatherland."

In the suburbs are many gardens, producing a variety of fruits; the grapes are remarkably fine, and are exported for the table to all parts of Russia, sometimes even reaching Petersburg. The wine is tolerable, and some of it which had been kept a sufficient length of time, we found to be good.

The Moravian Church consists simply of a nave; the internal arrangements being in unison with the nature of the people, and the character of the

religion. Mounting to the roof, we obtained an extensive view over the Volga and the surrounding country, and the little town looked like a gem in the midst of its gardens. On one side were a great many ricks of corn and hay, and on the other a Kalmuc-Tartar camp, the tents of which seemed to be taking shelter beneath the very trees planted by these good Germans, thereby paying a fitting homage of barbarism to civilization.

Between the ceiling and roof of the church is a large garret, which we entered, and found in it piles of books printed in strange characters. The undisturbed dust of years lay upon them. What were they, and why in such a place? They were translations of the Holy Scriptures into the Kalmuc-Tartar language, which had been taken there by some good Moravians, who, throwing aside all thoughts of self, prayed by night and laboured by day, to kindle in the souls of that benighted race a spark of the heavenly fire which dwelt within themselves. The icy storms of winter did not check their exertions; and the burning rays of the summer sun only gave fresh vigour to the divine impulses of their hearts, full of generous aspirations, of fervid sentiments, and an exalted love, caught from their Maker, to be thrown around these wandering children, who possessed neither a fixed home on this earth, nor a fixed hope of future rest. But a hostile

priesthood watched the pure work, with the blighting eyes of jealousy. Fearing the germ would quicken, and the young plant burst through the warm soil, while the fruit would escape their eager grasp, they appealed to the man whose will was law. His fiat went forth and stopped at once those noble efforts to rescue a people from the withering blast and chilly clutch of paganism. Nicholas, Emperor of all the Russias, does not hesitate to tear from their homes and families a million fathers, whose lives he sacrifices with a reckless wantonness. With his barbarian hordes, he sweeps over the provinces of his neighbour's empire, robbing the poor of the little food povidently set by for future wants; dragging the noble from his abode, and rudely snapping asunder his cherished ties; carrying devastation and crime where peaceful industry had reigned; hurling back civilization, and leaving his cankering curse in broken hearts, in ruined fortunes, in widows' agonies, and orphans' cries, upon that land o'er which he swept, like a blasting whirlwind, but which his legions will still be too feeble to retain. And what is the potent reason given for all this massacre?—It is, that on the throne of Othman sits one whom Nicholas, forsooth, proclaims intolerant. He who forbids some pious men to teach the poor infidel the sacred truths of God, complains of religious intolerance of the Turk.

Sarepta and the numerous German colonies are

additional examples to those which constantly appear in this heterogeneous empire, of races such as the Fins, the Kazan and Noguai Tartars, the Tcherimesses and Tchouvasses, who exist surrounded by the Russian people, yet seldom intermarry with them, and still retain their own languages, religious customs, and characteristics.

We spent the evening with the good Mr. Louser and his family. He and his wife had been educated at Neuwied, of which a little picture hung in their sitting-room. To meet those who had even seen that place, appeared like a spell, which carried their hearts from the steppe of the Volga to the banks of the Rhine. They invited some colonists to meet us; and we took leave of these warm-hearted and excellent people with feelings of deep regret.

Those only who, like us, had endured all the wretchedness of an Astrachan hotel, could imagine the luxury of the night we passed in clean beds, with white linen, and freedom from a crowd of noxious insects. The landlord supplied us with a stock of cold chickens and other eatables; and once more ensconced in our "tarantasse," we continued our journey.

Farewell, Sarepta! with your tranquil homes and sparkling fountains! You shine out a bright speck on the horizon of barbarism. May you long prosper; and may your light never be dimmed by the black cloud that surrounds you!

Long rows of bullock waggons, laden with the productions of Astrachan, were almost the only things which broke the monotony of the road. Immense tracts of land were cultivated with melons. In two hours we reached Tzaritzyn, where we remained only to change horses.

CHAPTER XII.

Adieu to the Volga—Steppe Travelling—Getting a Horse out of a Difficulty—The "Yamstchic"—Arrive at Novo-Tcherkask—The Bazaars—The Don Cossacks—Nakitchevan—Taganrog—Variety of Races—The Noguai Tartars—Value of Women—Costumes of the Noguais—The "Tsiganes"—Maripol—A Russian Urchin and a Tartar—Arabat—Rather Disagreeable.

REACHING soon the elevated land, which formed the commencement of the Great Steppe, through which we were about to travel for many days to come, we turned and looked over that mighty plain stretching south to the Caspian shores, and thence spreading on, and on, until it loses itself in the far, far east.

The eye wandered over this dreary tract—like a boundless sea—searching in vain for some object on which to find a resting-place, yet no hill nor mountain broke the clear level of the horizon's line; but nearer to our feet it fell upon the rolling waters of the majestic river, cut up into many sunlit streams by the green islands on its bosom. Here, indeed, could the eye find repose, and here it lingered long, and longed to linger still.

Alas! the moment of parting had come, one look more, one last adieu, one pang of regret, and we are off; but memory still brings back in crowded groups the thousand incidents of those three weeks we had spent in contemplating the changing scenes and ever varying beauties of the Volga.

Turning our regards to the route we were following, all appeared tame and blank. Each fresh league of steppe brought but a repetition of the last.

Over the earth, and through the air we flew; bounding, not rolling from point to point, of the uneven track. The "yamstchic" seemed totally indifferent to consequences, whether concerning his own neck or ours. Flourishing his whip, the half-broken horses, with every muscle and sinew on the stretch, laid to their work, and dashed frantically along, as though impelled by the fiery darts of malignant fiends, urging them on in some infernal chase.

There was, however, considerable exhilaration and excitement in this wild, almost savage progress; especially as our experience had made us learned in arranging the mattresses and pillows in the tarantasse; and as we had confidence in our new strong wheels; both affairs of much importance in steppe travelling.

Each station brought the same attempts at cheating or delay, both of which we firmly resisted; adopting, with the postmasters, a commanding and

sometimes even a threatening tone; not of summary chastisement, but of the vengeance we should bring down upon their heads, if not quickly supplied with the necessary horses.

All this would of course have been useless, had not the governor's order, even after we had quitted the district of Astrachan, given some show of reason to our assumed importance. Besides which André, to increase his own consequence in the opinion of those around, often invested us with rank and titles, which probably assisted in serving our purpose, though contrary to our wishes. By these united means we managed to proceed without much loss of time, or ruffling of temper.

We crossed the Don in the roughest of ferry-boats, but as we could drive on and off, it appeared, in comparison to the clumsy method adopted at Astrachan, like an advance in civilization. The country now became more undulating, its monotony being occasionally relieved by some flocks or herds, or a stray peep at the river.

The Donetz was crossed by a similar boat to that over the Don, and here in driving out one of our horses became restive, and finally toppled over, entangling himself in the complicated ropes by which he was attached to the vehicle. No attempt was made to detach him, no coaxing was resorted to; but the whip, being considered under the circumstances the best persuader, was laid on by the vigor-

ous arm of the "yamstchic," until, by dint of struggling and kicking, the poor animal by some curious accident regained his legs, and away we went as though nothing had happened.

Our experience does not agree with the character given of the Russian "yamstchic," by some travellers, who represent him as the mildest of all masters to his horses, talking to them pathetically, and addressing them by endearing terms. These soft words only flow while the animals are obedient to his will, or a flourish of his whip, towards which they always have an eye directed. While they gallop on at the top of their speed all is well, but let a difficulty arise, and then a continuous volley of oaths and abuse are showered on their heads, and blows quickly take the place of caresses.

On the evening of the same day we had a second opportunity of observing this. Our horses going at their usual pace took fright at some Kalmucs on dromedaries; and suddenly turning carried us into a deep hollow, from which we were extricated only by immense exertion, and an unmerciful lashing of the refractory team.

On stopping in the morning at a lonely post-station, we proceeded as usual to perform our ablutions. Soon after driving away, a young Cossack pursued us with my friend's watch, which had been left behind, a piece of honesty which he had no reason to regret.

Late at night on the 22nd we reached Novo-

Tcherkask, the capital of the Don Cossack country, through the heart of which we had been travelling for the last sixty hours. We were already fast asleep, and when André came to inform us that no horses were to be had, we treated the announcement with indifference, and continued our slumbers in the tarantasse, rather than submit to the uncertain beds of even a superior posting-house.

At six o'clock next morning we went forth to view the town; an hour at which the market-place and bazaar was crowded. Here we anticipated seeing in costume, and appearance, something to mark that people known in other parts of Europe by their warlike habits, but in this we were somewhat disappointed; the Don Cossacks being, in fact, of so mixed a race, that they are to be seen of all features and complexions. Their costume, indeed varies so little from that of other parts of Russia, that one would scarcely remark a difference.

There is, however, a certain independence of manner, combined with a military bearing, which is more distinctive. A soldier from fifteen to fifty, the Don Cossack may still be called on to serve the State in case of emergency, until the age of sixty: thus it may be said, that he is born, and dies, a soldier.

He provides his own horse and uniform, and prides himself on keeping the latter in good order, otherwise he appears to be nearly as dirty an animal as the true Russian, though on this point it is rather

amusing to read the opinions of different travellers. While Anatole Demidoff says that "he is sometimes repulsive in his filth, and *never* dreams of washing his hands;" Clarke particularly remarks of the Cossacks that their hands are *always* clean, and that they display both in their persons and houses the same propriety.

Compared, however, to the true Russians, they are, in this respect, certainly superior. As we have mentioned, we found the house of a Don Cossack the perfection of neatness and cleanliness; while we observed the abode of a Russian the very reverse.

The women are, in personal appearance, a decided improvement on those of the North; yet they can lay no particular claims to beauty. Their waists, however, are in their natural places, and not tucked under their arms, as amongst their northern sisters.

The bazaars are immense, and displayed all kinds of merchandize, amongst which the most conspicuous were the equipments for horse and man, necessary to their military calling. The market for provisions was well supplied, and immense quantities of grapes exposed for sale, the flavour of which we found to be excellent. The population is said to amount to about twelve thousand.

Situated on a height projecting boldly into the plain, Novo-Tcherkask has an imposing appearance, and being a place of recent creation, it has some of

the peculiarites of a Russian town in exaggeration. Thus its streets are enormously wide, so that the scanty population seems lost in them ; and the houses being low, this width even appears magnified. There is no shade ; and everything being white, the public buildings, the houses, and even the dust in the streets, an excessively disagreeable glare is produced, most fatiguing to the sight.

The court-house is the finest building; and the churches are as conspicuous as in most other Russian towns, the Don Cossacks being devoted adherents of the Russo-Greek religion.

Novo-Tcherkask was founded in 1806 to replace the old capital, Staro-Tcherkask, subject to the inundations of the Don. The present site was chosen, with the intention of making a strong military position, which has never been carried out.

The Don Cossacks occupy that great plain watered by the Don, as well as the more hilly country through which the Donetz passes. There are about six hundred thousand inhabitants scattered over this immense district, in *stanitzas*, or villages, and hamlets consisting rather of huts than houses. Their principal occupations are agriculture and the rearing of cattle, horses, and sheep; for which the country is admirably adapted, possessing the richest soil and most extensive pastures. Here the finest kinds of wheat are grown, and particularly that used in the manufacture of vermicelli and macaroni. Fishing is

also extensively carried on; and the vine much cultivated on the banks of the Don, though the wine is inferior to that made in the Crimea.

In consideration of their military services the Don Cossacks are subject to no taxes; but when it is considered that they provide their own horses, uniforms, and equipments, they may be regarded as in no way very highly favoured. We left Novo-Tcherkask at nine o'clock in the morning, going over the ground at the usual rate; and passed through the little Armenian town of Nakitchevan, which forms a kind of great bazaar for the productions of the East, the merchants having correspondents amongst their countrymen in Persia, Asia Minor, Turkey, and Astrachan, as well as in some towns of Europe. They also make a rich profit out of the wine of the country, the trade of which they have managed to monopolize.

On entering the Government of Ekaterinoslav, we were obliged to increase the number of our horses from three to four, and pay two-fifths additional per verst on the charge for each horse, which more than doubled the expense of the posting. Travelling in Russia is cheap. On a journey of more than a thousand miles, and having from three to five horses, including the price of padaroshnas, and the loss on the sale of the tarantasse, we averaged about sixpence an English mile, or twopence a head; nor could we have managed cheaper by taking the common teléga, as in that case we must have had two vehicles.

Towards sunset we reached a high part of the road, which was generally more hilly, whence a fine view of the Don and Sea of Azof was obtained; and late in the evening entering Taganrog, took up our quarters at a hotel kept by a Greek, having a fine exterior, but not being very clean in its interior.

This is an important commercial town, though excessively inconvenient, as the depth of water will only permit vessels of very small tonnage to approach within four or five versts of the port. Situate on a point of land which stretches into the Sea of Azof at its north-eastern extremity, it is the principal depôt of the trade carried on between that part of Southern Russia, and the various countries of Europe. The exportation of wheat and other raw produce is great, and macaroni manufactories are established. The average number of English vessels trading to this port amounted to about one hundred and ten annually.

Taganrog was one of the best specimens of a Russian provincial town we had seen: the houses are well built, neatly kept, and present a cheerful appearance. There are also some agreeable public gardens, nicely arranged, and in good order. It has its theatre, clubs, and other public buildings, amongst which the most interesting is the house where the Emperor Alexander died; formerly the residence of the governor, but, since the decease of that monarch, unoccupied. We visited the apartment in which his death took place,

and which is now converted into a chapel, where the service is regularly performed. There is a bronze statue of Alexander in the town.

The place is fortified towards the sea; but the fortifications were neglected, probably from their uselessness, as no moderate-sized vessels could get within range of the heaviest guns.

We found the bazaar extremely lively, from the variety of languages and costumes to be heard and seen; half the nations of Europe and many of Asia being there represented. Amongst the fixed inhabitants, which amount to upwards of twenty thousand, are a great number of Greeks. It is not one of the least striking things in Russia to find, that wherever lucrative affairs are carried on, there foreign merchants are to be found, who derive all the benefit from them, while comparatively few Russians are engaged in the larger commercial transactions.

We were indebted to the English Consul, who presented us to the Governor, for his kind attention during our two days' sojourn in Taganrog.

As our affection for steppe travelling had by no means grown stronger from a more intimate acquaintance with it, we had hoped to find a steamer, by which to take passage to Kertch; but the only boat on the station having been placed at the disposal of one of the Grand Dukes then in the Crimea, we determined to continue our journey by land.

Our route lay along the northern shore of the Sea

of Azof, over the same monotonous description of country which we had already traversed, and inhabited by a variety of races; the Little Russians, formerly Cossacks of the Ukraine, being the principal. The costume of these men differs but slightly from that of the Don Cossacks; consisting of a cotton tunic confined at the waist with a sash; loose trousers tucked into large boots, and a cap with a deep border of lamb-skin.

The women, however, are more picturesquely attired. They wear a shawl or large handkerchief wound round the head, somewhat in the form of a turban, and often ornamented with artificial flowers or fruit: the hair of the unmarried girls falls in long braids over the back, tied at the ends with coloured ribbon. The gown of printed cotton is worn beneath another of the same material, but much shorter and of different and bright colours; some had on Wellington boots, others coloured slippers. Both men and women are fine, and their carriage is good; many of the latter being well-looking.

The Noguai Tartars are also here in great numbers, having been confined within a district of fifty versts from north to south, and ninety from east to west, the Sea of Azof being a portion of the southern boundary.

The Noguai Tartars formed part of that immense migration, which, in the middle ages, came like an avalanche from the east to the west, carrying every-

thing before it; and which, even to the middle of the seventeenth century, still held Russia and the neighbouring countries in terror.

The Noguais consisted of wandering tribes; and ever since the Taurida fell under the Russian sway, it has been the fixed policy of the Government to induce them, by every means, to become settled. This has been partially successful, and some villages are formed in the district appropriated to them; but many still cling with tenacity to that roving life, which to the nomade barbarians has so many charms. All, however, will most probably, as other colonies close in around them, become fixed like their brethren.

The Noguais claim their descent, as the Arabs and Turks do, from Ishmael; and like these, they are all Mahometans. The women, as amongst other barbarous nations, do the most laborious work; and owe implicit obedience to their husbands. The Noguais buy their wives, and often have two or more.

According to Haxthausen, "the ordinary price of a young Noguai girl is thirty cows, or six hundred paper rubles, some bringing even a thousand rubles; young widows are cheaper, while old women are worth nothing whatever."

The Noguais have not the distinctive characteristics of a pure race: they vary much in complexion and features, inclining more or less either to the Caucasian or Mongol families. Those we saw were decidedly

nearer the former than the latter, and though they could not boast the regular lines seen in the Kazan or Crim Tartars, some of them had nevertheless exceedingly well-formed features; their complexions were generally dark, the eyes black and vivid. They are of middling height, and hold the head erect; indeed, the Noguais have a tolerable amount of self-esteem, believing themselves superior to most other races.

The men shave the head, and wear a cap with a deep band of fur, or lamb-skin. A cotton shirt, a short tunic also of cotton, and full trousers with morocco boots and slippers over them, form the usual summer dress; the materials being varied according to the wealth of the individual. The poor are wretchedly clad; the rich are said to be well, and sometimes even elegantly, dressed.

The costume of the women is easy and flowing, the ample pantaloon drawn in at the ankle; and slippers of yellow or red morocco cover the feet. They are very fond of dress, and wear a great variety of ornaments, amongst which are large rings in the ears, and nose also; with necklaces generally of coins. Before strangers the face is concealed by a large white shawl or veil, held in such a way as to show only the eyes; and even with this they appeared very shy, turning the head when looked at by us. The girls wear no veil. Both sexes are excessively fond of smoking.

Their principal pursuits are raising cattle and

horses, which they prefer to other occupations; but in this respect a gradual change is taking place, as they become settled and engage in agriculture. With an alteration of life and habits, an alteration in diet also naturally follows, and farinaceous is partly superseding an excess of animal food.

The Noguai reckons all property by the value of cows, and he who has the greatest number of daughters to sell, esteems himself a lucky fellow, for they are a kind of goods certain to produce a profitable return.

The houses in the villages we visited were mostly built of clay and straw, and some few of wood; but as the material of the latter must be imported, it is very dear, and therefore the structures composed of it are scarce.

There are many Armenians and Jews, and numerous German colonies also settled in these steppes: the two former are engaged in trade, while the latter are almost entirely devoted to agriculture. These, together with many pure Russian serfs of the crown, and some Greek and Bulgarian colonists, form a curious medley.

On changing horses at one of the villages on our route, a fair was being held, and there, requiring some little repair to the tarantasse, we had an opportunity of seeing a family of gipsies, called *Tsiganes;* those singular wanderers, who appear by nature to be born expressly to become tinkers. The man whose services

we obtained was a worthy specimen of the race; for a more wild, independent, and ferocious-looking vagabond could scarcely be imagined, and his physiognomy was not improved by the half-drunken scowl which sat upon it. They often lead a life of extreme misery, for an ardent love of brandy absorbs rapidly the gains of their hard work. They are wretchedly clad; and old and young, men, women, and children, are inveterately addicted to smoking. Their features, naturally good, are stamped with the marks of dissipation, neglect, and the play of the wilder passions. Huddled together in the rudest of tents, they seem to glory in their poverty, rags, and dirt; or when in movement display a careless and reckless manner which fully accords with their habits and character.

On the road we passed several rudely-made covered waggons, to which were yoked two dromedaries; carts also, each with a pair of high wheels, things never seen in the North, where four wheels are invariably used.

The first place we stopped at worthy of notice was Mariopol, a small sea-port at the embouchure of the Kalmious, a little river emptying itself into the Sea of Azof. The town is prettily situated, and is thriving, owing to its being the place of embarkation of the productions of the immediate districts, between the inhabitants of which and this town a brisk trade is carried on.

After quitting Mariopol we travelled mile after mile without seeing a human being, and reached Berdiansk,

a small town at the mouth of the Berda, which also empties itself into the Sea of Azof. Berdiansk is the chief depôt for salt imported from the Crimea: it contains about two thousand inhabitants, and possesses the only port in the Sea of Azof in which deep water is to be found. Passing through the Noguai Tartar district we visited Militopol, and thence pursued our route to Yenitchi.

Running along the north-eastern coast of the Crimea is a narrow strip of land called the "Tongue of Arabat," formed of sand and small shells, and dividing a long sheet of water, the Putrid Sea, from the Sea of Azof, with which it communicates by a channel opposite to Yenitchi. This we crossed in a ferry-boat, and pursued our way for eighty versts on an arid bank, presenting not a blade of vegetation, the posthouses being the sole habitations.

The only being we encountered was a solitary Tartar in a bullock-cart, who, not having moved his vehicle on one side fast enough to please an urchin of ten years old who was riding one of our leaders as postilion, he dealt him two or three smart blows on the head with his whip. The Tartar was a fine handsome man, but he crouched down in a state almost of fear. There was not much in the incident itself, yet it produced a host of reflections. How plainly did it demonstrate that but little more than half a century of subjugation was sufficient to crush the proud spirit of a race whose history was a series of

courageous actions, and whose name was synonymous in Europe with all that was daring and fierce.

We experienced none of those fetid exhalations from the Putrid Sea which are said to exist; but in certain states of the atmosphere its stagnant waters doubtless give off an effluvium pregnant with fever.

It was a lonely route, cheered only by an indistinct view of the Tschatir Dagh, rising up in the distance as if to enliven us with the anticipation of that mountain scenery, which afterwards appeared doubly beautiful from the amount of dreary steppe we had passed over.

At length the ruins of the fortress of Arabat came in sight, forming, as it were, the base of the tongue of land we were following. We explored these ruins of Turkish construction, which offered, however, little of interest; but there was a small mosque still pretty perfect. Surrounded by a deep moat, and projecting between the Putrid and Azof Seas, it must have been a fort of some strength.

The village of Arabat is composed of one long straggling street. We left it about sunset, soon after which the rain began to fall heavily, and we then, for the first time, experienced the real disagreeables of steppe travelling; sinking up to the axles in a bed of mud, our five horses (which we had been obliged to take since Yenitchi), could at times scarcely move the vehicle, and it was seven o'clock in the morning before we reached Kertch, having

been nearly twelve hours accomplishing a distance which should have occupied only half that time. As the rain had brought this state of things in so short a period, we could well imagine the plight we should have been in had several wet days produced a proportionate result. In that case we could fancy ourselves brought to a dead halt, looking from our tarantasse over a sea of swampy mud, and then turning to the commissariat, to calculate how long we could hold out in such an isolated position against the watery element.

CHAPTER XIII.

Panticapæum—The Hill of Mithridates—Yawning Tombs—The Hill of Gold—A Slight Atonement—Opening a Grave—Modern Kertch—Kertch under the Turks—View of Theodosia—Man's Wild Passions—Russian Barbarism—Arrive at Theodosia—Remains of the Ancient Town—A Scene on the Shore—Karasu-bazar—The Art of Turning—Coffee-houses—Khans and Churches.

AND now we are at Kertch,—the ancient Panticapæum. But where are the monuments? Where those works of art which the sculptor's chisel, guided by the light of genius, had struck from the lifeless rock into godlike forms to decorate this capital of the old Bosphorean empire, wherein dwelt near two thousand years ago, the king of Pontus? What is now left to tell of that great Mithridates, who, subjugating four and twenty kingdoms, then aspired to reduce the Roman empire to his yoke? Of him who, when he beheld his once victorious legions overturned by the conquering arms of Pompey, and saw his son, Pharnaces, by dark rebellion, rudely tearing the sacred ties of filial love asunder, put an end in this city to that existence, the charms of which had ceased when nature's strongest links were broken; and when another star had risen to outshine the brightness of his waned glory.

Proud Rome. Those Heraclean colonists of Chersonesus; the wild Huns; the Byzantine empire, the adventurous Genoese, and the bold Moslem—each in turn possessed the fair offspring of the Cimmerian Bosphorus, and thus she fell and rose, and fell again. Still amidst all changes there yet remained some few relics of bygone days, which spoke in mute eloquence, more loud than words, of former greatness. But a Russian horde came rolling from the north upon the devoted town, and with a Vandalism worthy of the frozen cradle of their birth—with senses too benumbed to appreciate the beautiful, and with feelings too callous to respect those time-hallowed works which the fierce Moslem even had spared—stretched forth the destroying hand, and swept away the last vestiges of antiquity.

We stood upon the hill where tradition states that Mithridates often sat to view his warlike bands ere they went forth to meet their enemies in deadly conflict. Before us lay the broad waters of the Euxine Sea tranquilly reposing; and beyond far away, darkly outlined on the blue firmament, stretched the lofty range of Caucasus, the birthplace of man's noblest race; where the children of the hills, for the last thirty years have grappled and still wrestle with the boasting colossus of Muscovy. The despot's slaves and the sons of freedom, in a death struggle—these to ravage, and the others to defend,

their wives and children, and their mountain homes, loved with such deep, such wild affection.

How the gushing heart pours out its flood of sympathy for those brave Circassians, who have thus untiringly contended through lingering weary years of war, unaided, unsupported, save by their good swords, their dauntless courage, and that exalted hope, the creation of a righteous cause; fighting on with an enduring fire of heroism, to quench which they proudly defy the hosts brought against them by the ruler of sixty millions of human beings!

We turned to the plain on the eastern edge of which once stood Panticapæum: it appeared like a great amphitheatre, covered with numberless mounds. In the valley and on the encircling hills, alike stood boldly out those *tumuli*, the abodes of death. But why do a thousand tombs, the portals of which were closed twenty centuries ago, now yawn before us as though the last trumpet had sounded, and the dead come forth? Because the great destroyer Man, who hurls down temples, shatters palaces, and levels cities, not yet satiated with the unholy work, flies to the silent grave, and desecrates with unclean hands even the ashes of the great, the learned, and the good.

Every tumulus of any size in this huge cemetery has been opened, pillaged of the gold and precious things it contained, and the dust of heroes and legislators scattered to the winds. First broken into for

their wealth, they are now systematically searched for antiquities to fill the museum of the Hermitage at Petersburg.

We descended and wandered through this plain. How many associations of the past arose, how many painful feelings of the present! We entered a large tomb, by a passage of beautiful masonry, forty paces long and twenty-four feet high, the upper tiers of stone projecting one over the other until they met to form the roof—a simple plan adopted before the arch was known. The mausoleum itself was of the same excellent workmanship, the stones cut with such accuracy that, laid without mortar, the lines of junction were scarcely visible: a cone-shaped roof was closed in by projecting tiers as in the passage.

Ascending to the top of the great mound, an admirable view was obtained of the Sea of Azof, the Hill of Mithridates, the modern town of Kertch, its harbour studded with shipping, and the opposite Isle of Taman.

We explored another tumulus enclosed within the boundaries of ill-kept public gardens. It was rather smaller than the first, but quite as well built, and its roof of the same construction, but pyramidal in form.

From this we drove about three miles from the town, to the largest of all these tumuli, standing boldly out upon the plain, like the great pyramid of Cheops, and towering proudly above the rest. This the Tartars call the "Hill of Gold," from the immense

quantity of that metal believed to have been found in it. According to a very old tradition, mentioned by Pallas, and repeated by Clarke, a treasure, guarded by a virgin, whose nights were passed in tears, was shut up in the obscurity of this tomb.

The only entrance now existing is a hole, broken through the top, by which we scrambled over the loose stones which had fallen in and half filled this great chamber of death, the dimensions of which are much larger, but the construction similar to those visited before. It is still a popular belief in the neighbourhood that this tumulus was the burial-place of Mithridates.

All these mounds, immense as some of them are, and this one in particular, are artificial, as may at once be detected by observing their formation at the cuttings which have been made into them. The "Hill of Gold" is composed of loose stones, with a layer of earth over them, and the Hill of Mithridates consists almost entirely of broken pottery, mixed with earth.

The Russian Government, as some slight atonement for the excesses committed by the barbarous soldiery, on their first possession of Kertch,* has ordered all antiquities, not forwarded to Petersburg, to be deposited in the museum, built on the Hill of Mithridates. Here are now accumulated a great variety of sculptures in marble, some sarcophagi of

* Clarke says that the Russians destroyed five thousand houses at Kertch.

carved wood, Etruscan vases, and other pottery, and a great collection of bracelets, necklaces, bangles, and rings of gold, &c., many of these latter being exactly similar to articles found in the tumuli of Scandinavia, which we had examined a few months previously in the museums of Copenhagen and Stockholm.

A great flight of stone steps has been built by the Russians, in the Grecian style, on the side of the Hill of Mithridates, which leads to a road winding to the top, where is a conspicuous monument, erected to the memory of a Russian general, and to be seen from every spot for miles around. This and the museum are white, glaring objects, painfully opposed to the associations called up by the locality.

A German physician, resident at Kertch, has been appointed to superintend the archæological researches going on there; and having, through the English Vice-Consul's politeness, been introduced to this gentleman, he kindly invited us to be present at the opening of a tomb, which it was supposed would contain some antiquities. We accordingly assembled at the appointed hour and place, and watched with excited interest the proceedings of the diggers: at last the grave was opened, but contained only the fragments of a broken vase, portions of half-calcined bones of a young child, a glass dish, about the size of a common saucer, and a small lachrymatory also of glass. This was less than had been expected from the appearance of the tomb; but such is, however, often the case, the

richest discoveries being made in tumuli where they are least suspected to exist.

Some more soundings were taken. A second excavation brought to light a vase in a perfect state. On opening it, however, the ashes only of a burnt body were found; but this was far from proving that nothing else had been deposited, for it was the custom often to place the remains in one spot, and the ornaments and other valuables in a neighbouring one.

No other vestiges of the ancient Panticapæum now remain beyond her tombs. In them are buried all the records of her glories; but the undying tongue of history proclaims for all time the gallant deeds and deep learning of her great king, who not only conquered so many nations, but conversed with each in its own language.

The modern town of Kertch has little in itself to excite interest. There is an affectation of classic architecture, as in most Russian places, which looks well at a distance, but will not always bear inspection. Nothing has so disagreeable an effect as Corinthian or Doric columns, made in patched-up materials. An air of shabbiness is produced, totally out of character with those beautiful orders, not only displeasing to the eye but revolting to the taste.

The condition of the inhabitants of Kertch, at the beginning of this century, was most deplorable. It consisted of "about a hundred houses inhabited by Greeks, whose only means of existence was by fish-

ing." * There is every reason to believe that Kertch, before it fell into the hands of the Russians, was in a thriving state. It was partly inhabited by Greeks and Genoese, who took advantage of its position to carry on a profitable, although restricted trade; for though the West was closed, the East was partly open to them; and the Turks, from habit and feeling, entering but little into mercantile affairs, left them to these more active people. It was after the Russian occupation that the town, which had superseded the ancient one, was destroyed, the people crushed, and the slight traffic which had existed annihilated; but there is a vitality about commerce which, after even the worst of checks, makes it spring up again with renewed life and vigour. So with Kertch: from the mere *absence* of the early Russian pressure, which reduced it to poverty and misery, trade began gradually to expand, and at length, under the enlightened government of the Prince Woronzoff, (a man whose character shines out with increased brilliancy in the midst of the corruption existing around him,) and in spite of numerous absurd restrictions, it took a more active form, and at the period of our visit was becoming rapidly developed.

It is the great depôt of all the salt exported from the Crimea, derived from the salt lakes in its vicinity, and the port through which passes the whole of the trade of the Sea of Azof, the Don, and the Kuban, as well

* "Voyage en Crimée et sur les bords de la Mer 'Noire.' Par J. Reuilly.

as of Europe, by the Euxine, to the south-eastern provinces of the Russian empire. A few years of prosperity (especially since the freedom of the corn trade in England) has given an extraordinary impetus to Kertch; and while its Greek and Russian population has been augmenting, a number of Tartars have latterly taken up their permanent abode in its suburbs.

Having spent two agreeable days at Kertch—which we owed to the great kindness and hospitality of Mr. Catley, the Vice-Consul, who was good enough to accompany us to see everything worthy of notice, and for which we are happy to have this opportunity of thanking him—we took our departure.

The country through which our course lay, between Kertch and Theodosia or Kaffa, is mentioned by early writers as having been thickly populated, and as producing an abundance of grain; now there are to be seen only some wandering Tartars, and a few insignificant villages, while, for the most part, the rich land remains uncultivated.

When we came in sight of Theodosia, from a hill to the north of the great bay, on the eastern side of which it is situated, the morning sun had just risen, and was throwing its slanting rays upon the bright-looking little town, following the semicircular shore of the harbour, and flanked at each extremity by the imposing ruins of fortresses, forming the two ends of a line of Genoese walls and towers, which encircled

the place on the land side, but which now in their decay, looked like decrepid warriors bending over a helpless infant, which they still loved, but could no longer protect.

Seen from this commanding spot, far from the busy movement already commenced upon the shore, there was an air of tranquil, unassuming beauty about Theodosia exceedingly agreeable. The morning was calm, and several vessels lay in the harbour with their national flags hanging listlessly to the masts; while in the offing of the ample bay, with flapping sails, was a motionless brig, waiting a favouring breeze to waft it into port.

How difficult it seemed, while looking on this scene, to realise the fact, that all the worst and wildest passions of man had so often raged upon that spot, which appeared as though expressly destined by nature for the abode of peaceful industry. Yet so it was; and one could scarcely believe that this little town, of not ten thousand souls, was once a fine city, said to have contained in the time of the Genoese thirty-six thousand houses.

Though it is unquestionable, that during the Tartar occupation but few of the most ancient monuments remained, marking the period of the early Milesian colonists, who settled at Theodosia and at Kertch five hundred years before Christ; of that under the Bosphorean kings, or Mithridates and his successors, which were probably destroyed during subsequent

troubles, ending in the invasion of the Huns; yet it is certain that some of the finest buildings of the Genoese, still existed, surrounded by numerous mosques, and a populous town, when Potemkin entered it with his victorious soldiers in 1783, after which the work of fierce destruction commenced.

Our countryman, Clarke, who visited Theodosia about twenty years subsequent to this event, was himself an eye-witness of some of these barbarous excesses. He says that the population then consisted of only fifty families, and of these some houses contained more than one. He saw beautiful mosques overturned by the soldiers, or changed into magazines; minarets thrown down; public fountains broken, and aqueducts destroyed; while the officers themselves looked on. Amongst these was a magnificent tower used as a minaret for the principal mosque, and one of the ancient and characteristic monuments of the country. But this was not all; even those few relics of sculpture in marble of the time of the ancient Greek inhabitants, which had been preserved by the Mahometans, were broken in pieces by these ruthless barbarians.

One of the attachés of the Russian ambassador sent from St. Petersburg to Constantinople in 1793, thus speaks of Theodosia: "It is nothing more at present than a sad heap of stones, which recalls only the ancient splendour of the town, to substitute for this souvenir that of its decline and ruin." This is a

Russian authority, and others might be adduced to show that it was after the Muscovites had taken possession, all that was venerable, which had escaped amidst the many changes of masters, was finally and effectually destroyed by them.

We are thus particular in bringing forward such facts, because in writing of these towns and their growing prosperity, it is often implied, that they are only now recovering from the state to which the Turks had reduced them; whereas, in fact, they are but just beginning to conceal the sorrowful evidences of the devastation of their present rulers.

It is quite true that the old Turkish restrictive system was calculated to suppress the commerce of this and other ports of the Crimea; but the expansion of their trade within the last few years, has rather arisen from that general development of all mercantile affairs during a long peace, and in spite of the impediments thrown in their way by the Russian government, than from any fostering care it has bestowed upon them.

Under a more enlightened policy, and a liberal system, both Theodosia and Kertch would by this time have risen to an amount of prosperity, which, though not yet rivalling their palmy days, might still have aspired to a future revival of some of their wealth and importance.

We entered Theodosia about seven o'clock in the morning, and having taken breakfast at a tolerably

good German hotel, went to examine the old fortifications, the lines of which could be easily traced. These are all of solid masonry and of great extent; and in their day must have proved a formidable barrier to any attacking force: they do not mount to a date anterior to the Genoese occupation. Within the mouldering walls of the citadel were some rude-looking sheds occupied by Russians. One fountain surmounted by an obelisk still exists near the ruins of the northern fortress. This and the old fortifications are the only objects which are left to carry the thoughts back to other ages; for the town itself is modern.

We scrambled to the highest wall still remaining of the citadel, and thence had a fine view of the locality. A promontory projecting far into the bay on its western side, and to the south-east of the town, protects the harbour from the winds of that quarter, while the opposite or eastern coast of the bay running well to the south, gives the harbour, when looking from the town, the appearance of being land-locked. It is altogether an admirable port, and well suited to the requirements of an extensive trade. At the time of our visit the modern defences were insignificant.

Running in a semicircular form is a series of hills which enclose a plain at the back of the town, whereon the ancient city and its suburbs must have partly stood: on these hills are many tumuli similar to those of Kertch.

The shore presented an active scene: picturesque Greeks and Tartars, Italians and Jews, Armenians and Russians, were moving about; here great piles of corn were ready for shipment, and there heaps of hides. The gates of large stores were thrown wide open, as if to receive the produce of the world. Lazy dromedaries, still attached by their yokes to the *madshari* (four-wheeled covered waggon), lay basking in the sun, while their Tartar master slept soundly within the unwieldy-looking vehicle. And divers sailors of all nations lounged about, as though they were the only idlers of the town.

From the harbour we strolled through the streets and bazaar, where the same costumes were to be seen, and a goodly array of all kinds of merchandize was exposed for sale. There is a small museum for the antiquities found in the tumuli; but the person in whose charge it was had left for two days, and the keys were not forthcoming.

Soon after leaving Theodosia we again entered on the steppe, and encountered nothing worthy of attention until we reaching Karasu-bazar, a town principally inhabited by Tartars; but having some Armenians, Greeks, Jews, and Russians. It is situate in a valley, between two hills, across which runs a small stream, called the Karasu (literally black water), giving its name to the place, which looks rather pretty, as it is approached by a long low bridge over the little river.

On entering the narrow street one might have fancied oneself suddenly transported to the centre of Persia, so completely did everything differ from what we had hitherto seen in the Russian dominions.

This town appears to have suffered much less, since the Russian occupation, than Theodosia or Kertch. At all events, whatever may have been pulled down, it is clear, that very little has been put up, at least in such positions as to destroy the characteristics of the place, which are most truly Eastern.

The principal street is lined with shops, the fronts of which are composed of two shutters hung horizontally, one above, and the other below; so that in the day the upper one forms an awning, and the lower a bench, whereon can be displayed the goods for sale, or on which the master generally sits; the whole front of the shop being thus thrown open. On each side of the street is a footpath, raised about eighteen inches, and wide enough only for two people to pass with difficulty, while the middle of the road looks more like a prolonged ditch than a highway through a town.

Nevertheless Karasu-bazar is one of the most thriving places in the Crimea, and quite a seat of manufactures, nearly all of which are carried on in public, and by the most pristine methods. A morning walk not only interested, but amused us exceedingly,

as we watched these rivals of Birmingham and Manchester.

The preparation of morocco and other coloured leathers, making boots and slippers, fashioning caps to suit the different races, the manufacturing of all kinds of ironmongery, pottery, and saddles, soap and candles, are a few of the occupations of the people.

Turning, too, is carried on most extensively, and is done much in the same way, as we might fancy our forefather Adam going about it. The object is set in motion with the right hand, by a bow and string, similar to that used in drilling; while the chisel is held in the left It will thus be seen, that just one-half the labour of the individual is lost, as the motion of the object is alternately in opposite directions. The dexterity with which the work is accomplished, however, is quite astonishing.

The market-place was supplied with fruit and vegetables, in great variety, and profusion. Here it was that we first saw performed the novel process of shoeing an ox. The poor beast being thrown on his back, the four legs are tied together, and the loop of the rope put over the fork of a prop, the end of which rests on the ground, thus keeping the feet well up in the air: the master then sits on the neck, as though he had quite made up his mind to strangle the wretched animal, which, with starting eyes, and projecting tongue, gasps for breath, and often shows strong indications of suffering. In the mean time

the farrier proceeds in the most cool and business-like manner, to pare the hoofs, and nail on the iron plates, perfectly regardless as to whether he is driving into the quick or not. The affair being finished, the unfortunate brute, released from his ridiculous position, gets upon his legs, and walks away very much like a cat on the ice in walnut-shells.

There are many coffee-houses, consisting of a number of square compartments, divided by low railings, furnished with cushions, and having a large brass vessel in the centre to receive the ashes of the pipes. Here the taciturn Tartar, or grave Armenian, sit cross-legged, smoking their tchiboucs; the former, perhaps, wondering whether Allah intended to snatch him from the clutch of the Russians, and the latter calculating the amount of gain from his last piece of usury.

The private houses of the Tartars consist only of a ground-floor, looking into a court; so that externally nothing is to be seen but a blank wall pierced with the entrance doors. I should recommend those, who have a strong desire to obtain a greater knowledge of the appearance of the Tartar quarters, of such towns as Karasubazar or Simpheropol, and who may have no chance of accompanying the allied armies in their intended capture of the Crimea, to take a trip, when they are next in Paris, as far as Montrieul. There, walking through the lanes of dirtyish white-looking walls, enclosing the peach gardens, they may

fancy themselves in the Tartar streets of the capital of the Taurida.

Karasubazar possesses some large khans, or depôts for merchandize, a great many mosques, and several Greek and Armenian churches; its inhabitants amounting to about five thousand. Being in the centre of the Crimea, it is well situated for carrying on its various trades; and altogether we doubt whether there is a more bustling, business-like, and industrious place in the country.

CHAPTER XIV.

A Change of Scenery—Simpheropol and Ac-Metchet—Mysterious Figures—The Salgir Valley—Bribing Yamstchiks—Abode of a Crim Tartar—Tartar Maiden's Skill—The Tartar Matron—Three Young Tartar Wives—Mountain Caverns of Kisil Koba—The Lower Caverns—Tchatir Dagh Beautiful Scenery—Arrival at Alushta—Genoese Ruins—Modest Russian Church.

FROM Karasubazar our course still lay over the Steppe, and in turning the eyes to the north, its dreary monotony appeared the same as in the country of the Don Cossack. To the south, however, all was changed. We had approached so near the lofty range of hills which bounds the southern coast of the Crimea, and separates the great plains from the Black Sea, that we could already distinguish the valleys and the wooded heights. Hill after hill arose, stretching to the west, until they lost themselves in the majestic mountain of Tchatir Dagh, lording it haughtily over all the rest.

From its north-eastern side, sweeps gently down a lovely valley, through which the little river Salgir runs, murmuring on its winding course until it meets and flows beneath an abrupt rocky wall; the broken

edge of the steppe, through the solitudes of which, after bidding adieu to its mountain home, it is doomed to wander, and finally mingle its bright streams with the stagnant waters of the Putrid Sea.

On the very margin of this, here strongly defined boundary, between plain and mountain, stands the modern town of Simpheropol, and her elder sister, Ac-Metchet (the white mosque), clinging together, but not embracing, with smiles on the face, but rancour in the heart. They are not the offspring of the same father. The elder is the Tartar's daughter—modest, unassuming, and retiring; the younger, a bold Russian wench, covered with paint and tinsel, wearing ornaments which she has stolen from a Grecian beauty: her self-esteem ever prominent, and, with wanton vanity, displaying those outward, vulgar charms, which ill conceal the rottenness within.

The new part of Simpheropol is indeed but another sample of a Russian provincial capital, in addition to those we have so often described, though better than the generality of them. It has wide streets, straggling houses, painted roofs, conspicuous churches, fine public buildings, well-kept gardens, rattling droskies, and a tolerably good German hotel, at which we took up our quarters.

A population of about twelve thousand souls, of which half are Tartars, a quarter Russians, and the rest made up of gipsies, Jews, Greeks and Armenians, produces a mixture of costumes, and a clatter of

tongues, which we now heartily desired to exchange for the more interesting sight of the simple Tartar, in the quiet little villages of his mountain haunts.

This wish, however, did not prevent us exploring thoroughly the Tartar quarter of the town; in the streets of which, containing the private houses, nothing was to be seen but an occasional phantom, issuing from what might well have been the gloomy portal of a sepulchre, flitting across our path, and vanishing in an instant, within another equally mysterious door, which closed silently, and with magic quickness. These were the Tartar women, wrapped up in white, head, face, and body, with nothing left but two brilliant eyes, and a pair of yellow morocco boots. Once we saw, from an unfortunate hitch in the large pantaloon, a very tiny piece of—do not be shocked, fair reader—stockingless leg, to indicate that warm, living flesh and blood were there.

The Tartar bazaars of Simpheropol differ but little from those of Karasubazar, excepting that they are rather cleaner. The manufactures are of the same description. We remained two nights at Simpheropol, much enjoying the luxury of clean beds.

The horses are put to. The tarantasse is again at the door. We are away for Alushta. Rapidly down from the high land we gallop, and wind along the river's bank beneath the precipice surmounted by Taurida's capital. On! on! now we mount up fair

Salgir's valley; we begin to breathe the fresh mountain atmosphere. Beautiful trees and bright-coloured flowers please the eye, while their odours fill the air; and the honey-bee sips the nectar from their inviting cups, to turn it into dainty sweets for man. The soft music of warbling birds is heard mingling with the gentle murmurs of the stream. The sun is brightly shining. All nature is laughing; and, with elated spirits, on! on! we go up the rich valley of the Salgir.

A strange noise is heard—it is but the screeching of the ill-greased wheels, on their wooden axles, of a waggon which stout baffaloes are slowly dragging up the hill; but it joins harshly with the Tartar maiden's song, as she winnows the corn on the house-top. The cattle are lowing; the ripe, luxuriant fruit still hangs to the trees. The golden produce of the rich harvest is piled up in stacks. Nature, from her bounteous womb, has brought forth plenteously to supply her children's wants. All these things we hear, and see, and feel, as we still go on, and on, up the valley of the Salgir.

But what shade of sadness is that which passes through the brain in the midst of such gladness, like a fleecy cloud skimming o'er the sun? It is the sorrowful remembrance that these children of the hills, who but lately were free as the wind that plays round their mountains are now only bondsmen; and bondsmen to one who despises their

religion*, desecrates their tombs, and tramples on themselves. What bitter thoughts of burning vengeance may still be pent up in those bosoms! what acts of fell daring and fierce patriotism may yet burst forth from those bruised but not broken spirits, at the memory of what they were, the stern conviction of what they are, and the living aspiration of what they hope to be! And these were our dreams as we went on, and on, up the romantic valley of the Salgir.

Seven versts beyond "Mahmoud Sultan," we turned off the road to the little Tartar village of Kisil Koba. As it was about two versts from the post route, our "yamstchik" refused to drive us there: all persuasion was unavailing, until backed by a bribe. We had no objection, however, to give it, knowing that his acceding to our request was a favour we could scarcely expect to receive for nothing.

This was only the second time we had made use of this kind of stimulus; which if resorted to often, when travelling in Russia, rather retards than advances progress. The unfortunate victim, being handed from one yamstchik and postmaster to another. Unless the looked-for boon is forthcoming, no horses are to be found; and when they are put to, the driver takes them along at a pace so slow, that the traveller,

* Clarke asserts that the Russians took the stones from the Tartar tombs for building material.

full of indignation, is obliged to submit to the extortion, and if possible smother his rising sense of humiliation at feeling that he is being "done." Besides which, the act of bribery is an acknowledgment that he is in their hands, whereas the assumptian of authority carries with it considerably more weight amongst the lower orders of Russia than of any other country in Europe.

We put up for the night in the house of a fine old Tartar; a very happy father of seven promising sons, all grown to manhood, and all having taken unto themselves wives. They were the most thriving family in the village, and we met with a ready welcome from them.

Ushered into the best room, we threw ourselves on the cushions; and taking off our boots, endeavoured to twist our unyielding legs into the eccentric position necessary to the act of sitting "à la Tatar." Not that we wished either the bearded old man or the juniors to labour under the delusion that this was our accustomed method of disposing of our lower extremities, but that we found it rather difficult to feed in an apartment where there was neither table nor chair by resorting to any other contrivance.

These preliminaries being arranged, we had time to look round the apartment, which was about fourteen feet long by twelve wide. Cushions were placed along the sides and ends, leaving only the doors free; the centre being covered with rugs of

divers manufacture, material, and colour. The walls were nicely whitewashed, and hung around with embroidery, and other needlework, done by those daughters-in-law now living in the house. These proofs of industry and taste were accomplished before marriage; and were evidently regarded with becoming satisfaction by the loving husbands, as they watched us admiring them.

The Tartar maiden who can make a great display of such emblems of skill and perseverance is an object of respect, and held up as worthy of emulation. On some shelves were the holiday dresses of the women, neatly folded, and each having its own compartment. On examination, we found they were of silk, some of them being embroidered.

We would have fain passed our evening smoking the tchibouc, breathing in a fumid atmosphere of fragrant Latakia, or in drawing deep inspirations to the bubbling sound of the soothing narguilé. But, alas! the refined tobacco of Turkey existed not. Cherry-sticks there were, but they seemed never to have been cleaned, while amber mouthpieces appeared to be known only by reputation.

The vulgar weed grown on the neighbouring estate, having nothing refined about it, we took to cigarettes in despair, and shutting our eyes, tried to dream that they were the true eastern luxuries. But it was of no avail, so we roused ourselves and looked to other sources for amusement. Calling André into

the room, we held a flying conversation through him with the old Tartar, and two of his sons, who were seated on the divan.

The Tartar mother came in and out, considering herself, and considered by the rest of the family, in no danger of being run away with by the "Giaours." She was probably about fifty, was much wrinkled, but had been good-looking; and if the bloom of youth sat no longer on her cheeks, the fire of her piercing black eyes remained undimmed. Withal she was a good-tempered-looking old soul.

We, however, were very anxious to see the young women of the family, but they were in a part of the house devoted to the females, and across the boundary of which, the foot of no stranger man dared intrude. To our insinuations, that a visit from them would gratify us, a deaf ear was turned. Nevertheless we had some evidence that curiosity, that reputed failing of the sex, was at work; for, on casting our eyes towards the open door, on several occasions, we observed a half-concealed face suddenly disappearing, or a mysterious form gliding noiselessly away.

These were, however, but nibblings at the bait. As time passed on, they became a little bolder, and were not so quick in moving out of sight. A happy thought now struck us, and we produced a large coloured map of Europe, which, solemnly unfolding, we spread upon the rug, and bade André explain its

meaning: such a thing had never been seen or dreamed of before, and the heads of the men were thrust forward at the same moment, with considerable danger of concussion.

All this was observed by the females outside. The bait was taken. The fish were caught. Curiosity had triumphed, and three young wives came coyly towards us, in all the splendour of their unveiled charms. One was very beautiful, and the other two could well bear inspection. They all had eyes, such as a pious Moslem might desire the bright houris who hereafter served him to possess.

At first they were shy—very shy; but doubtless, after comparing us with their Tartar husbands, they came to the conclusion that we were not very dangerous fellows; for soon they permitted us to point out the few places of which they knew the names, and hung over the map with faces full of intelligence.

Their dress consisted of a short robe, beneath a tunic of a different colour, confined at the waist by a girdle, and full trousers drawn in at the ankles, with slippers of morocco. One of the girdles was ornamented with plates of metal as large as small saucers; the other ornaments consisted principally of small gold Turkish coins, pierced with holes, and suspended as necklaces, &c.

Having said "Bon soir" to our family party, we prepared to make ourselves comfortable for the night;

which consisted in taking off our coats, and placing them under the pillows to form bolsters. The candles were extinguished; but the shutter being too short for the window, and having besides a wide crack in it, allowed the pale moon's rays to enter, and give an uncertain light to the room. Presently a tall figure came gliding in, noiselessly as a shadow—for no slippers are worn upon the rugs, and the boots are soleless—and then disappeared; when the daylight came, we found the old Tartar, fast asleep, near to us; for he would not be turned out of his own bed, or rather cushion. Why should he have been? There was plenty of room for us all.

We were up the next morning soon after sunrise, and started immediately to carry out the object of our visit to this locality—viz., to explore the celebrated mountain caverns of Kisil Koba.

Taking some stout guides, our party gathered like a snow-ball, as it rolled through the village, until we had some twenty followers. Ascending a very steep hill, which gave me the disagreeable warning that I had by no means regained my usual strength, we entered the upper grottoes by an opening so low, that we were obliged to creep on our hands and knees, by which means we reached a large vaulted natural cavern. Having lighted four or five candles, each person took one, but their feeble rays at first only served to make darkness more visible. As the eyes became accustomed, however, to the half

obscurity, we were enabled to see something of the form of this lofty chamber in the living rock.

Groping and crawling, on wet and slimy ground, through the intermediate passages, sometimes sixty or seventy feet long, we visited seven of these great gloomy dungeons, fitting abodes for the three fierce daughters of Nox and Acheron. As we had no intention quite to bury ourselves in the bowels of the mountain, we quitted the mephitic atmosphere, and again respired the pure air without. As the roofs of these caverns were pretty solid, there was no great development of those beautiful formations from the calcareous deposits of percolating water, in the shape of large stalactites or stalagmites, so that they owed nearly all their interest to their grandeur and extent.

Descending the mountain, we entered a lower set of caves; where, after wading up to the ankles through mud, and bent double beneath the low passages, we came upon water, which our guides said was very deep. We made this the limit of our explorings, leaving the task to more adventurous travellers to enlighten the world as to the distance reached by this singular succession of natural chambers; no known investigator, however persevering, having hitherto reached the end.

We returned to the village, entirely inhabited by Tartars devoted to agriculture. Here we observed a novel way of thrashing corn, by attaching a horse to a stake, and driving him about over the sheaves, to

trample out the grain; the process being attended to by girls.

The post-horses we had ordered not having arrived, the Tartars supplied us, and we drove to Dafstan-bazar, at the foot of Tchatir Dagh, which also has extensive caverns, though we did not visit them, as they nearly resemble the others. Nor did we attempt the ascent of that mountain, as I felt unequal to the effort; but the commanding and glorious view from its summit would have amply repaid the fatigue of the expedition.

The Salgir valley now began to contract, until it formed a mountain-pass, which somewhat reminded me of Killiecrankie, in Perthshire; but was even more charming than that. Mountain upon mountain arose on either hand, while, on the right, the noble Tchatir Dagh displayed its giddy heights, its frightful precipices, and toppling crags, separated and embraced by groups or long lines of trees, in which the venerable oak and stately beech mingled their foliage with a hundred kinds of arboret, producing a richness of colouring, a diversity of tints, and a play of light and shade, which the bluff projecting naked rocks only made more lovely; and in their combination created an admirable "mélange" of the sublime and beautiful.

From Dafstan-bazar is a "chaussée," which goes over the mountain ridge, descends to the coast, and then follows it to Sebastopol. To commemorate the

construction of this road, an obelisk has been erected on the summit of the pass; the great work having been commenced in the reign of Alexander, and finished in the early part of that of Nicholas. A little farther on is a tablet over a fountain, erected to the memory of a Russian general, wounded by the Turks near the spot.

From this point is a descent of thirteen versts to Alushta, opening occasional views over the Black Sea, and presenting scenery, on looking back, to which Nature in a joyous mood, with her glowing genius and unerring taste, had given the happiest touches of the picturesque.

The true barrier had now been passed which separates the great steppe, over whose dead level of snow the cold north wind sweeps in the winter (producing a climate unusually rigorous for the latitude), from the warm and sunny regions of the south, into which we had just entered.

On every hand were to be seen Tartar houses embosomed amidst mulberry and walnut trees, with the green tobacco leaf hanging to dry on an awning of trellis-work projecting in front; or villages picturesquely suspended to the side of a hill, the roofs of one row of houses forming a terraced street for that above, and the whole looking like a giant flight of steps. Far on in the valley shot up the tall poplar, here covered with thick foliage, and grown into a noble tree. Bright mountain streamlets, flash-

ing into light, were again concealed beneath the fringe of the myrtle and lime; while wide tracts were planted with the vine, on which hung the clustering grape; for the vintage had not yet commenced.

It was about seven in the evening when we arrived at the Tartar village of Alushta; and as we had given over night travelling since leaving the steppe, we took a survey of the accommodation of the post-house, the result of which led us to decide on sleeping in the tarantasse, as the minor of two evils; so, having settled this important matter, we set out in search of a dinner, and found by good luck a fine hot dish of stewed mutton, at a Tartar cafe, which proved to be good. By the time this was finished, the shades of evening had closed around us, and we had some little difficulty in finding our way back, through the narrow lanes, to the posting-house, which is in the outskirts of the village.

Insignificant as Alushta now is, it was the seat of a bishopric, and a populous, strongly-fortified town in the time of the Genoese. Parts of the ancient citadel, erected by the emperor Justinian about the middle of the fifteenth century, on an isolated hill, still exist in their ruin as hoary memorials of the past.

The Tartar village is built into this hill, from the base to the summit; so that the whole forms a pyramid, of which the last remnants of the fortress constitute the apex, and around which these humble

abodes appear to cling, as though they found safety in the vicinity of their solid masonry.

We mounted to the ruins, passing along the curious streets of house-tops, which served for many other purposes. On some were great piles of walnuts; on others, girls were winnowing corn, as we had seen before; and old Tartars sitting cross-legged, smoking their pipes, as though they found the hard-rolled earth, of which the roofs are composed, the most agreeable kind of seat.

At length we stood upon the massive masonry over which fourteen centuries have rolled: but *time* had not been its destroyer, the cankering hand of decay had not alone swept over its stern solidity. It looked more like the young man who had been struck down in all the pride of strength, and the force of conscious power, than the decrepit old man whose vitality had been sapped by the foul poison of lingering disease.

All the houses had a number of horizontal poles in front, thickly hung with tobacco leaves, which threw a deep and cool shade upon them. From our high position, we looked over the Black Sea, and some projecting points on the coast; and in the opposite direction, up the beautiful valley we had yesterday descended, teeming with fertility.

There are a sufficient number of Russians at Alushta to require a church; and it was quite refreshing to find a quiet, chaste little edifice of stone,

which would have done honour to a village of England. It was in form and external appearance, quite different to any we had seen in the country before: composed of a single nave, it had neither dome, cupola, detached belfry, nor painted roof, almost invariable appendages in Russia; but possessed a tower forming the entrance, and surmounted by a steeple. For once a Greek Russian church had put on an air of humility. It was a phenomenon that we could not understand, and cannot now explain, but we duly record the fact.

Alushta never could have been, and never will be, important as a mercantile port; for it has no harbour; but in fine weather it becomes a very convenient place for embarking the produce of the immediate neighbourhood, and especially linseed, for which it is particularly celebrated; the flax, together with tobacco and the vine, being extensively cultivated.

CHAPTER XV.

The Southern Coast—Reach Yalta—An Englishman's Grave—Botanical Garden of Nikita—Wines of the Crimea—Yalta a Watering-place—A Russian Colonel—Struggling with Passion—"Haute Politique"—Russian Opinions—Russian Education—Annihilating Turkey—Russian Prisons—Leave Yalta—Castle of Alupka—A Luxuriant Spot—A Romantic Hotel.

Our route now lay along the southern coast, and, for the first ten miles, winding round the edges or passing over the tops of mountains; one continuous ascent, for two thousand feet, until within a few hundred yards of Biouk Lambat.

From many points of the road, scenery opened which was both beautiful and grand. Tchatir Dagh and other lofty mountains showed their jagged and broken summits, from every little shelf beneath which the dark pine sprang. Lower down was a rich mass of foliage: here the mountain-ash and the maple, the alder and beech, the oak, the cedar and linden, vied with each other in the deep shades of their clothing; to which the myrtle and fig-tree, the olive and vine, added their ever-varying hues. The warm fingers of Autumn

having swept across all, now brightly contrasted their tints, and now softly blended them. Grim limestone rocks pushed threateningly forward, and picturesque houses peeped laughingly out from the foliate slopes of luxuriant valleys; while, over the whole, spread the full blush of Morning, which gave them fresh beauty without lessening her own.

Soon after leaving Biouk Lambat, the mountains and glens assume a wilder character. As the road approaches nearer to the Euxine Sea, it is extremely winding; and there are many country-seats most romantically placed. The last eight miles of the journey to Yalta is through a lovely country, where the mountains again recede from the coast, giving place to a series of valleys, over which Nature has shed some of her choicest blessings – unrivalled position, soil, aspect and climate; and man has not altogether forgotten to acknowledge these generous gifts. The fairest flowers and fruits of the earth are there cultivated, and the "chateaus" of the nobility are studded about. We seemed once more to have reached civilization: elegant private carriages, gentlemen on horseback, and well-dressed women, were to be seen as we dashed through a village of villas, and soon after into Yalta.

The macadamized road is excellent. Our four horses, which the rules here obliged us to take, were harnessed in pairs, instead of abreast, as in the

Steppe, and went along, up hill and down hill, at a rapid pace. There was no difficulty at the post-houses, and everything indicated our being near the centre of a vigorous government. Indeed, Prince Woronzoff is said to have a strict "surveillance" exercised over the postmasters; and thus travelling in the south of Crim Tartary is as good as any in Europe. After eating luncheon at the hotel of Yalta, we hired horses from a Tartar, and, taking him for a guide, rode forth to traverse that valley, and take a nearer inspection of the estates and mansions, on which we had looked down from the road with so much pleasure.

Traversing Marsanda, the property of the young Count Woronzoff, we arrived at an elegant little church, on the edge of the estate. Entering the churchyard, the first thing we saw, beneath the deep shade of a magnificent walnut-tree, was a plain but neat monument, bearing the following inscription :—

"Sacred to the Memory of
JOHN PROUT, M.D.,
who departed this life on the {27th October, / 8 November,} 1841, in the
47th year of his age."

It was but an unassuming epitaph, yet, what feelings did it arouse! Strange and mysterious link is that, which binds our souls most strongly to our native land, even when we are farthest from it. The very dust of this our countryman, and these few simple words, inscribed in familiar characters upon his tomb, touched

the chords of sympathy, and made them vibrate. Crowding thoughts came back upon us, which we had fancied long since buried, and a thousand souvenirs of hallowed objects passed rapidly before us. With a sigh for one to us unknown, we left his silent grave.

We now wound through the lanes of Magarash, separating parcels of land which had been disposed of by the Government on liberal conditions to the occupiers, and which now have villas and handsome residences upon them. Both the estate of Marsanda, and the colony of Russian nobles, Magarash, take their names from small villages on the coast, formerly inhabited by Greeks who were banished by the Russians to Mariopol.

Near the promontory of Nikita, which thrusts itself into the Black Sea, is a little village of the same name, and close by this a large botanical garden, the property of the state. The director is a German gentleman, who kindly showed us over the gardens, where, amongst a large collection of other plants, are upwards of three hundred varieties of the vine; and as the grapes still hung on them, we had an opportunity of tasting the most remarkable; one from America, where it grows wild, was of a peculiarly marked flavour, quite different to any grape we had ever before tasted.

Taking us to his comfortable house, standing in the vinery, our host gave us some old Crimea muscatelle,

which would take a high place amongst the sweet wines of Europe.

The whole of these valleys on the southern coast, from the mountains to the sea-shore, are now covered with the vine; and a great quantity of wine is made of all kinds, and of course of various qualities. These have names given them, such as Bordeaux, or Burgundy, not from any resemblance in flavour, but from the locality whence the vine was originally brought. The grape, however, from soil and climate, is much modified or totally changed in taste; thus the character of the wine necessarily becomes altered also. We had many opportunities, while in the Crimea, of tasting the better class of wines, which had already attained some age: the red have more body than Bordeaux, are not so heavy as port; but they have a raciness of "goût," which is marked and characteristic, and they may safely be pronounced excellent. When young they have a wild rough flavour, and the inferior qualities are not agreeable. We found some descriptions of the sparkling and white wines exceedingly good; but they all require keeping, and being sound they remain without deterioration for years. On leaving Nikita we changed our route, returning to Yalta partly by the sea-shore.

Yalta, under the Greeks, was a considerable place, which, however, few ruins at present remain to attest. Situate on the northern part of a considerable bay,

formed by two promontories (one to the north-east and the other to the south-west; it is well sheltered, except from south-easterly winds), which throw up a heavy sea, rendering the anchorage of the roadstead dangerous. It is a touching-place for the steamers between Odessa, Sevastopol, and Kertch, and becomes very animated on the arrival of this fortnightly visitor, which happened to make her appearance while we were there.

An attempt is being made to turn Yalta into a watering-place, a humble kind of Brighton: not that it will resemble that town in any one respect, beyond being washed by the waters of the sea; for a more delightful situation than Yalta can scarcely be conceived. Resting beneath the shadow of a mountain ridge, running inland, and forming for several miles the north-eastern boundary of a lovely valley, covered with gardens, and shut in on every side by richly-wooded heights, except towards the sea, it enjoys a delicious climate, and is capable of being made one of the most charming places in Europe for the invalid.

The winters are generally extremely mild, and the flowers blossom at that season like the spring. The town is rapidly rising into importance, and, seen from a distance, is remarkably picturesque; a gay little church perched on a hill forming a conspicuous object.

It cannot be said that the hotel is worthy of the place, for it was dirty and indifferent; but as no human being of any respectability, beyond the passing traveller, ever stays in it, the complaints he may make to the landlord are treated with contempt, or at least regarded with indifference. In fact, as a rule, it is useless to make much fuss about the dirt of an ill-conducted hotel in whatever country it may be, but best to get out of it as quickly as possible; for we may feel assured that, should the master not have the eye to detect such irregularities, he has a small organ of order, and is never likely to effectually remedy them.

Shortly after the arrival of the steamer from Odessa, a Russian officer entered the room of the hotel in which we were seated. He appeared excited, and called for wine, which he drank in deep draughts. Travellers thus meeting face to face in a small apartment are not accustomed to regard each other like cats in a garret, so the usual salutations took place, and we soon found ourselves engaged in conversation. The stranger volunteered his name—Colonel ——, "ci-devant" aide-de-camp to Prince ——.

A post telega rattled into the court; the great military cloak was put on, though the weather was broiling, and amidst divers "salaams" the door was closed. We walked to the window: a loud whip-crack was heard, and away went the horses, and away went a forage cap and a dingy bundle. It was our

new acquaintance, already made comfortable on a small heap of straw.

Two hours passed by: we had perpetrated the act of feeding; the sun had sunk deep behind the western mountains; the last rosy tinge had disappeared from the clouds, and darkness rolled heavily over the fair valley of Yalta. A loud clatter is in the street; flashes come from the horses' feet; the sound is hushed suddenly; our door again opens: a military cap and mantle are flung carelessly down; it is our soldier friend again.

Blackness sat on his brow, fire burned in his eye, and smothered passions seemed darkly brooding; but he forgot not what was due to himself in the presence of strangers, nor did he forget what was due to them *as* strangers; so, rousing himself and beating down the demon which raged within, he called for more wine and drank deeply again.

> "Then bring me wine, the banquet bring,
> Man was not form'd to live alone;
> I'll be that light unmeaning thing,
> That smiles with all and weeps with none."

Such might well have been the sentiments of Colonel ——, as he threw aside his sombre looks, talked gaily and loudly, and drank deeper still. We ordered wine too, Crimean of course. No man should be such a muff as to call for foreign wine in a country which produces its own; and the presence of the Colonel insured our having it good. We drank, but in moderation.

The conversation became animated, but it was of that skirmishing kind that, although the firing never ceased, the ground often changed. We discussed America, skimmed over Asia, and lightly touched upon Africa, returned to Europe, but finally, true as the needle to the pole, after every fresh deviation of the compass, we got back to Russia. Perhaps this was natural. Just now that country was deeply interesting to us; it was all—it was everything, and ever had been so to him.

The then (1850) late political events came on the "tapis;" the revolution in France, and the convulsions of so many other countries. "Ah!" said he, "England never knows her own interests. The moment had arrived; she and Russia should have joined and divided Europe between them." A true Russian feeling.

We protested that England had no such extensive ideas. "Just so," he replied; "it is the absence of that 'haute politique' of which I complain."

We argued that such a project was easy to talk of in a snug little room on the romantic borders of the valley of Yalta, but rather more difficult to accomplish. "Not at all. The fleets of England and the armies of Russia are a match for the world."

But what about justice and right? "Mere trifles. The 'haute politique' of great nations should never condescend to attend to such minutiæ."

We were off at a tangent, and education is the theme.

"Russia," said our Colonel, "is the only country which understands and carries out the true principles of education. The living languages—the living languages are the only sure foundation on which to build the superstructure of deep knowledge. Look now at England, how lamentably ignorant even her better classes are in this respect, whilst we, the nobility of Russia, speak at least four languages with fluency."

Singular mixture of truth and fallacy. The little spice of truth was, that England *does* neglect a most essential part of polite education in not more generally teaching modern languages:—the great fallacy in asserting, that this one point in Russia forms but the foundation, while in fact it constitutes nearly the whole of the knowledge of the only educated class.

We speak not here of that high nobility always seen in Europe (for none others are allowed to travel), who have at their disposal the literature of the world, the great map of science spread open to them, the fine arts in their noblest works, and above all that experience of men and things to be gained in no other school but that of travelling; but of that more numerous class *in* Russia, where the press—not only the newspaper press, but books and pamphlets, everything which can disseminate truth, mental or physical—is under a strict and rigorous censorship.

Now to superficial observers this may appear unimportant, but those who think more deeply soon discover how profoundly debasing to the human mind is such a system. The mere absence of all that reading which can elevate the soul is bad enough; but when to this is added the presence only of that class of literature which has a tendency to concentrate the thoughts upon a single point, and that point calling forth no exalted sentiments, the intellect dwindles into narrow prejudices, the offspring of presumptuous ignorance.

Thus the great aim of Russian education is to create the belief that Russia, "par excellence," is the bravest, greatest, and most powerful nation of the earth; that her church is the only true child of Christ; and that her ruler is the chosen one of God, to guide, sustain, and protect the "orthodox faith."

And to what end are *these* sentiments alone insidiously instilled into the minds of the people? Simply to aid and cover the undying and ever-active ambition of the house of Romanoff. Nothing is left undone to accomplish this result. The priesthood becomes the fulcrum of a mighty lever wherewith to act upon the people. Superstition is encouraged, fanaticism induced, beneath the burning influences of which the vital sources of pure religion are dried up.

Even those which at first sight appear the noblest institutions of the country are degraded to the same

unhallowed purpose. All the children who receive their education in the schools of foundling hospitals are watched with care, in order that they may become more ready tools, more fitting implements for carrying out the deep design on which the whole fabric of the State is built. Whether in science they are found efficient, or whether they display a talent for intrigue, they are both of equal value; the one in military affairs, the other for diplomacy. The only step to honour is through the army or the civil offices. No great talent can exist out of the employment of the Government: when it is found it is appropriated; to leave it to fructify would be dangerous.

From education, our conversation turned to Turkey. For the Turks our Russian had *no* mercy. In his opinion, they were a base, degraded people, doomed, soul and body, to perdition; cowards in heart, and craven in spirit, with no sense of honour or majesty of feeling, and who must fall before the mere weight of intellect possessed by the superior Muscovite race.

Having thus annihilated Turkey in imagination, we turned to prison discipline, the cleanliness of the prisons, and the treatment of prisoners; and here again, to our surprise, we found poor old England was sadly behind the enlightened Russia—that the dear elderly lady was, in fact, fast sinking into drivelling dotage; and could scarcely be expected to grapple anything with such vigour as the young giant, whose

cause the worthy son of such a sire was now advocating.

Such are a few snatches of the conversation, which lasted far into night. It must not be supposed that our colonel had drunk so much wine as to make him express other than his fixed opinions: no, he had taken just sufficient to induce him to speak without reserve, not only his own sentiments, but those that actuate and pervade the whole Russian nation; and this belief alone has induced us to trouble the reader with so long a deviation from our route.

We must not omit to state that England was defended by us, as valiantly as she was attacked; not that there was anything said directly offensive to her dignity.

While speaking of prisons, Colonel ——— mentioned that of Odessa as being a perfect model, and said that he himself was principally concerned in bringing it to such a satisfactory condition. As we expressed a strong inclination to visit a place where so many new ideas might be gained to carry home, he called for some paper, and a sheet was brought which bore no remains of having been white, and the following letter of introduction to the chief of the police of Odessa was written in Russe, and which, being open, there was no breach of faith in having translated:—"I kiss your hand, and that of your wife; I caress the children; I embrace you in my heart, and recommend the bearer to your consideration."

Next morning we heard that Colonel ——— was married to the Princess ——— who had either run away, or was separated from him; that he had the night before gone to the house of her brother, in the neighbourhood, where she was then domiciled, to seek an interview, or obtain a reconciliation; that he had been received with hauteur, and treated with contempt by her and her relatives, and that high words and angry threats had been exchanged. Still smarting with wounded feelings, and burning with rage, he had issued from his telega the previous evening, and showed in his countenance those passions which he afterwards concealed. He left the hotel very early next morning, but whether anything disagreeable arose out of his conjugal visit we never heard.

At seven o'clock in the morning we were again "en route" with the mountain range on our right, and a narrow valley on the left, if possible more luxuriant in its vegetation than we had hitherto seen. Fine country residences occupy every site, whence a good view of the sea and the valley can be obtained; amongst the larger of which is that of Count Potocky; and further on the chaste-looking palace of Orianda, the property of the empress, on a well-chosen level spot, the grounds of which were not yet arranged.

We passed several Tartar villages, and then turning to the left of the main road, descended to Alupka, the splendid castle of Prince Woronzoff, a massive and imposing pile of building, not referable to any par-

ticular class of architecture, but somewhat resembling the Elizabethan. The library and dining-room are fine, but the drawing-room smaller in proportion. Many of the other apartments were simply, almost plainly furnished, and about some were strong evidences of the English tastes and early education of the prince. The conservatories, into one of which several of the rooms open, are admirable, and the view from the front glorious. Facing, and almost breaking at your feet, are the surging waters of the Black Sea; on the left is the valley—here more broken but always beautiful—while on the right projects the craggy outline of the rocky shore.

The valley is here so contracted that it seems as though the great mountains behind threaten to push it into the sea. The grounds are not therefore extensive, but everything that refined taste can accomplish has been done to render them worthy of the noble palace they adorn. Indeed the bold combination of art and nature has been executed with a master-hand. The only mistake about the whole place is the colour of the stone with which the castle is built. Being of a greenish grey, it is a bad reflector of the light, and thus variety, the very life of that kind of architecture, is wanting.

Had it been the intention to produce a building of a solemn, gloomy aspect, then the stone would have harmonized well with a heavier style of architecture;

whereas now the material and character of the edifice are not in accord. There is an absence of light and shade, and even the perspective, which tends so much to produce æsthetic beauty, appears much lessened from none of the lines being well defined, or brought clearly out. Consequently a flatness, almost a tameness, exists which robs the pile of much of its artistic effect.

The very object of multiplying lines in this kind of architecture, by projecting towers, by turrets, and battlements, is simply to get variety; but for the full development of *that*, strong light and shade are absolutely necessary, while here they scarcely exist. And as these qualities are essential to the picturesque, Alupka loses much also, in that respect, of what it might have been if constructed of a whiter stone.

Had such been the case, the most perfect example would have existed here of the picturesque, the beautiful, and the sublime, united in one spot, anywhere to be found. With this exception, there remains very little to be desired.

Protected from cold winds on every side, overhung with high mountains, and open to the south, the valley of Alupka is the warmest spot on the southern coast of the Crimea. Tropical plants and fruits flourish there; and nearly all those of the temperate zone come to perfection. The mulberry and medlar, the quince, pomegranate, almond, and apricot, the peach, olive, and fig; the walnut, plum, apple, pear,

and cherry, are among them, while there are a great variety of beautiful shrubs.

The place is kept in perfect order; the head gardener being, we believe, a German. Nor while the prince attends to his own comforts does he neglect those of his peasants and the Tartars on his estate. He has erected a pretty little mosque, and a Russian Greek church, both of which are admirably placed.

And even passing travellers are cared for. An Italian, and his wife who speaks three or four languages, are placed in a small hotel romantically situated, and scrupulously clean, where we took the best breakfast we had had since leaving the Miss Bensons' hotel at Petersburg; and we only regretted that our time did not permit us to enjoy a few days in so delicious a retreat, surrounded by those striking contrasts of sturdy rocks and brilliant flowers.

CHAPTER XVI.

Leave Alupka—Sublime Scenery—The Baidar Pass—An Ill-used Valley—Reach Balaclava—Ruins by Twilight and Moonlight—Balaclava—The Harbour—Reach Sevastopol—Effects of Crimean Wine—English Society—The Port and Harbours—The Fortifications—Casemated Fortresses—Remarks on the Fortifications—Russian Black Sea Fleet—Russian Corruption—Defences towards the Land—Landing-places for an Army—Balaclava desirable for a besieging Army—Attacking Sevastopol from the North—The Club-house—Military Hospital—The Great Docks Sailors' Barracks—Watering the Fleet.

Soon after leaving Alupka all is changed. No longer does the wild vine's clasping tendril seek a hold in the creviced steep, nor the pomegranate find shelter in the cliff's indented side. No longer does the knarled oak spread his wide branches over the minor offspring of the forest, nor the dark cypress show its graceful form, for vegetation finds not the prolific soil wherein to push its tendrilled roots, and even the adventurous pine seeks in vain a chink in which to obtain space and nourishment.

The sublime triumphs over the beautiful, and desolation with its barren aspect reigns around. Here Nature, in her maddest moments, has torn from the mountain-top huge fragments of its sub-

substance, plucked large blocks from the frightful precipice's crest, and wrenched large masses from the jagged surface of the crag. One great mass she pitches on its smallest end, and there it rests, looking as though the gentlest zephyr might destroy the equilibrium and send it toppling over. Another she lays like a prostrate suppliant giant near it. That mighty chip of virgin rock is hurled to the bottom of the dread abyss, while this, arrested on its way by a projecting unseen rock, seems suspended in mid air, and leaves the mind to wonder why it does not go rushing on. A thousand blocks of all forms and sizes are tossed about in wilful wantonness, producing a scene of savage magnificence.

In the midst of all this, the Tartar's frail house is crouching, for the owner is a fatalist, and here builds his abode, regardless of the solemn warnings given by the convulsions of past years,* sleeping soundly

* Large masses of rock fall from time to time from the lofty cliffs above. One of these sad accidents occurred at Koutchoukoy in 1784, of which Pallas gives the following description, and which I translate from the French :—"The coast was a succession of ravines, in one of which ran a small stream. The 10th of February the earth began to crack and separate; and the same day the stream, which turned two Tartar mills, was lost in the chasm. Two days after the crack in the earth had separated wider and wider, and the appearance of real danger had driven the Tartars from their houses, with their goods and cattle. All the part between the ravines of which we have spoken above, from the elevated part of the rock to the sea, was precipitated at midnight, with a frightful noise, for a distance of nearly two versts

beneath the tottering mountain, in the consoling belief that it will not fall and crush him, unless Allah has so designed.

Through this state of wild confusion wound our road, and then we struck upon a line cut along the wall of cliff, with a thousand feet of precipice above and below. Before us extended far into the Euxine sea, in haughty grandeur, the southern promontory of the peninsula; the frowning Criou-Metopon, so well and often so sadly known to the ancient Greek navigators. Traversing a long gallery which reminded us of those found in the passes of Switzerland, the road, hitherto near the sea, turns suddenly to the right, and takes a sinuous course up the almost perpendicular side of the mountain, here covered with low shrubs and stunted trees, to the summit of the Baidar pass, on which a great stone archway has been erected.

The road is excellent; and the horses in good

(about a mile and a half English), and a width of from seven hundred to a thousand yards. This falling in continued till the 26th of February, leaving a hollow of twenty yards in depth. That night two light shocks of earthquake were felt, after which the water of the stream which had previously disappeared showed itself again on the surface, and commenced running in a different direction, after having formed many pools and marshy places in the depths and on its new banks. Beside the two mills of which we have spoken, this downfall buried eight houses, with their entire gardens and fields, in its ruins." Near to the same spot, at Kikeneis, an immense portion of a mountain also slipped in 1802.

condition, being accustomed to their work, often galloped for miles together continuously up hill. We now entered the valley of Baidar, having the forest of the same name on the right hand, a ride through which is said to be highly interesting This valley is in a similar position to a lovely woman, of whose charms her admirer had given too glowing a description, and had thus raised up a host of critics who, in their desire to prove her less beautiful than she had been painted, would rob her of the merits she really possessed.

Some writers having spoken of the Baidar valley with rapturous admiration, others follow and bring forward comparisons which are not favourable to it. Pallas says, that the valleys of the Caucasus surpass it in beauty. Clarke contends that it will not bear comparison with divers views in Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland.

Now this is rather hard upon the Baidar valley, which really is a good example of the beautiful. About ten miles long, with many villages and gardens, and some pretty streams, fertile and cultivated, it is surrounded by thickly-wooded mountains, and has an air of quiet and repose remarkably agreeable.

It is an excellent specimen of a different class of scenery to any we had before found in the Crimean range. The valley of Alupka possesses much of the beautiful united with the picturesque, and in some parts with the sublime. This kind of scenery,

varying in its combinations, exists along the whole coast until Alupka is passed, when the sublime alone is met with. Soon after leaving it, the valley of Baidar is entered, which, though possessing nothing of the sublime, and but little of the picturesque, still remains beautiful.

The soft languishing glance of the blue eye is not less charming because the dark eye flashes with a loving fire; nor are the pale moon's rays less attractive, because the sun sheds forth a greater light. Comparisons in scenery should not be made unless the objects are of precisely the same character. There is not a valley in Sweden nor in Switzerland, as far as my experience goes, and probably not in Norway, which at all resembles that of Baidar.

We changed horses at the Tartar village in the middle of the valley; and as there appeared nothing of sufficient interest to detain us, we continued our journey. A few miles beyond the village the mountains close in. The road takes a turn to the left, and the landscape again expands into the little valley of Varnoutka, the scenery of which is exceedingly interesting; but it afterwards becomes tame, until near Balaclava, where it is much bolder.

We reached the latter place just as the setting sun was throwing a red light on the towers and walls of the old Genoese fortress, now in ruins. It gave a strange unnatural glare to their grim features; an

expression of youth which does not exist—a false colouring not in keeping with facts; like paint upon a faded beauty. Half-an-hour after, when the fictitious glow had departed, and they stood out in bold relief from the tall eastern promontory, there was an air of gloomy pride and venerable grandeur which was almost solemn. Clear twilight seems to harmonize admirably with this class of buildings, where its severe lines admit of but little variety; but for the light Gothic in ruin with the flowing tracery of its windows, its pinnacles and flying buttresses, or for the elegant Corinthian, and Composite, with their graceful columniation, give me bright moonlight:

> "If thou would'st view fair Melrose aright,
> Go visit it by the pale moonlight."

Sir Walter Scott's taste was too chaste not to appreciate immediately the enchanting effect of her soft beams, which give an air of quiet sadness peculiarly appropriate under such circumstances. We might offer the same advice to the Eastern traveller, and tell him, that should he desire to behold the beautiful "Baalbec" (in Syria) in perfection, he should see it when the tall fluted columns are silvered by the softening rays of the moon, and when he has gazed long and rapturously on the six giants supporting their entablature, which still remain of the *great* temple, and rise towards heaven sumptuously beautiful, let him turn to the smaller temple, tolerably perfect, and view its peripteral columniation, its delicate

frieze, and ornamented cornice, and especially its noble portico, and then a feeling of soul-absorbing admiration will arise, and a soft melancholy steal over him at the thought of these superb structures thus left to crumble beneath the decaying touch of Time. And yet they look so lovely in their decadence, that the deep-drawn sigh will spring as much from affection as regret. For another class of ruin, in which are heavy columns, and an imposing look of power, such as we find in the magnificent architectural remains of Egypt, the golden-tinted light of day, as found in that sunny clime, is well adapted. The great hall of Karnac could be scarcely appreciated in its fullest grandeur under any other circumstances.

But we have wandered too far; let us back to Symbalon. Balaclava formed part of the Heraclean Chersonesus, being situate at the south-eastern end of that peninsula, across the base of which a wall stretched from its port to the eastern extremity of the bay of Inkerman. Thus exposed, it has often been the scene of deadly struggles. The last battle fought here was when the Russians, in their *extreme attachment* for Chahyn Guerai supported his cause against the Turks, who had espoused the opposite side. After cutting the Tartars to pieces at Baktcheberai, and getting possession of Caffa, the former defeated Selym Khan at Balaclava, restored Chahyn, and in a fit of *friendship* transported all his Greek and Armenian subjects to different parts of Russia.

These unfortunate creatures were thus exposed, without proper protection, to a rigorous winter, beneath the severity of which great numbers perished.

Yet in spite of this gigantic act of villany, Chahyn. Guerai, in 1783, gave over his throne to the ambitious Catherine. Thus vanished the last embers of the Mongol Empire, the fire of which for centuries had illuminated the world, and which had once been as powerful as any that ever existed.

Balaclava, the ancient Symbalon, has now sunk down from its former prosperous condition into an insignificant little town, occupied by a colony of Greek pirates, whom Catherine found worthy implements in assisting her to carry out her designs of robbery against the Turks, from whom they had revolted. Balaclava was the reward of their treason. Thus after having been founded by the Greeks, occupied by the Genoese, and possessed by the Tartars, it has become Greek again.

Its harbour is about three-quarters of a mile long, from three hundred and fifty to four hundred yards wide, and very deep. It is so completely land-locked, that, looking from the town, it is difficult to say which is the entrance from the sea. The mouth is formed by lofty promontories, which approach so near that two large ships could scarcely pass in the narrow channel; at the opposite end the waters of the port wash the foot of the mountain, while the place itself stands on the western shore.

Some of the inhabitants are prosperous: they of course are no longer pirates, but they look as though they would have no objection to do a little smuggling. The modern fortifications of Balaclava towards the sea were but insignificant. The Chausée not being finished, our last nine miles was but a return, in an increased form, of the jolting of the steppe, and glad indeed were we when the tarantasse rumbled heavily into the dirty courtyard of the hotel at Sevastopol.

Scarcely had we appeased the cravings which a long fast had produced, when André came with a smiling face to inform us that an English *gentleman* was in the public room. Here was a treat: we rushed pell-mell down the rickety stairs, which led from a gallery surrounding a quadrangular court into the midst of the filth there contained, through which we were obliged to walk, and entered a room where we saw an elderly man sitting, who proved to be the sought-for individual.

We lost no time in making his acquaintance, and found that he was no less a personage than the master-caulker of the dockyard of Sevastopol. Having served in the Russian navy under Admiral Greig, he had risen to occupy this situation, to which were attached a good income, and some perquisites.

He was a rough old English sailor, with a strong propensity for Crimean wine, which he poured down in considerable quantities. For an hour he was rational enough, and gave us a great deal of informa-

tion about the place, where he had resided many years.

Suddenly, however, his organs of wit, time, and tune, appeared to become excited. While favouring us with the song, "Come, landlord, fill the flowing bowl until it does run over," the veritable host appeared at the door, with a fresh cool bottle in his hand, as though he were quite accustomed to these harmonious appeals to his hospitality. Our countryman's "adhesiveness" now became in a state of exaltation, and he insisted on the phlegmatic German joining the party, at the same time bestowing on him divers and sundry caresses, by shaking of hands and thumps on the back, which threatened to knock vitality out of him. This latter process was always repeated at the end of "Come, landlord," &c., on which away went mine host for another bottle from the same bin,—the best in the cellar.

The old sailor now appeared like a wound-up musical-box, which only played two tunes, for alternating with the "Flowing bowl" came "If I lose my awl (all), I lose my life, but to lose my wife's a trifle," a song which was invariably terminated by the question "Isn't that a sentimental idea?" "To lose my awl—all."

Not exactly comprehending at first wherein the sentiment existed, we asked to be enlightened on the subject, and were informed that this was the method taken by a witty cobbler to let the world know he

was quite indifferent to the circumstance of his wife having fled, one fine morning, with a gay Lothario.

After ringing the changes five times on each of these songs, and as many bottles having succeeded the same number of thumps, we thought it better to leave the society of our creditable countryman, who, however, gave us a pressing invitation to dine with him at his own proper mansion. This we were ungrateful enough not to accept, as it was quite evident that his wit never took a higher flight than the flowing bowl.

We left, thinking that if his caulking talent permitted him to fill a seam, as well as he could fill himself, the Tzar might certainly be congratulated on possessing a very valuable public servant.

It was not until afterwards that we found there was more sentiment in his "awl" than we had at first supposed; for his own wife had served him the same trick as she of the cobbler, having ran away with another English "employé" in the Russian service some years before, and subsequently married him: while the caulker had taken consolation in a second union, and they were all four living, nice specimens of English society at that time, in Sevastopol.

An inquiry was then and there going on, respecting some disgraceful quarrel between two Russian officers, in the house of the runaway wife.

It was well for the honour of the English nation that there was at least one family at Sevastopol

"sans reproche." And we must here express the sense of obligation we labour under to Colonel Upton and his amiable family for their extreme kindness to us during a ten days' sojourn at that place, by not only treating us with great hospitality, but by placing their carriages, horses, and boats at our service; by affording us a great deal of interesting information, and by accompanying us to see everything worthy of admiration in the neighbourhood.

The port of Sevastopol consists of a bay running in a south-easterly direction about four miles long, and a mile wide at the entrance, diminishing to four hundred yards at the end, where the "Tchernaia Retchka," or Black River, empties itself. The average depth is about eight fathoms, the bottom being composed of mud in the centre, and gravel at the sides. On the southern coast of this bay are the commercial, military, and careening harbours; the quarantine harbour being outside the entrance. All these taking a southerly direction and having deep water.

The military harbour is the largest, being about a mile-and-a-half long, by four hundred yards wide, and is completely land-locked on every side. Here it is that the Black Sea fleet is moored in the winter; the largest ships being able to lie with all their stores on board close to the quays. The small harbour, which contains the naval arsenal and docks, is on the eastern side of the military harbour, near the entrance.

The port is defended to the south by six principal batteries and fortresses, each mounting from fifty to a hundred and ninety guns; and the north by four, having from eighteen to a hundred and twenty pieces each; and besides these are many smaller batteries.

The fortresses are built on the casemate principle, three of them having three tiers of guns, and a fourth two tiers. Fort St. Nicholas is the largest, and mounts about a hundred and ninety guns: on carefully counting them, *we* made a hundred and eighty-six. By great interest we obtained permission to enter this fortress. It is built of white limestone: a fine sound stone, which becomes hard and is very durable, the same material being used for all the other forts. Between every two casemates are furnaces for heating shot red hot: we measured the caliber of the guns, and found it to be eight inches, capable of throwing shells or sixty-eight pound solid shot.

Whether all the guns in the fortress were of the same size, it is impossible to say, but my belief is that most of the fortifications of Sevastopol are heavily armed. We entered Fort St. Nicholas through the elegantly-furnished apartments of the military commandant, situated at its south-western end.

At the period of our visit there were certainly not more than eight hundred and fifty pieces of artillery defending the port towards the sea, and of these about three hundred and fifty could be concentrated on a

ship entering the bay.* Other batteries, however, are said to have been since built. We took some trouble to ascertain these facts by counting the guns of the various forts; not always an easy matter where any suspicion of our object might have subjected us to grave inconveniences. Sevastopol is admirably adapted by nature for a strong position towards the sea, and it will be seen from what we have stated above that this has been fully taken advantage of to render it one of the most formidably fortified places in that direction which could be imagined.

We are well aware that the *casemated* fortresses are very badly constructed, and though having an

* Mr. Oliphant says, "Nothing can be more formidable than Sebastopol from the seaward. Upon a future occasion we visited it in a steamer, and found that at one point we were commanded by twelve hundred pieces of artillery."

Now, if by this passage it is to be understood that twelve hundred guns mounted on the fortresses and batteries of that place, and commanding the sea, can be concentrated on any one spot, it is manifestly a mistake. That point where the greatest number of pieces of artillery can be concentrated is probably about the centre of a line drawn from Cape Constantine to the eastern promontory of the Quarantine Harbour, on which part of the guns of Fort Constantine, the Quarantine Battery, Fort Alexander, and Fort St. Nicholas, with some from other batteries, may be brought to bear; but these cannot at the utmost amount to more than three hundred and fifty pieces, even allowing that spot to be commanded by a hundred guns of Fort St. Nicholas.

imposing exterior, that the walls are filled in with rubble. The work was carried on under Russian engineers, whose object was to make as much money as possible out of it. They were, moreover, found to be defective in ventilation, to remedy which some alterations were subsequently made; but admitting all their defects, they are still strong enough to inflict some amount of injury on an attacking fleet before their guns could be silenced. And when that is accomplished, supposing there are now nine hundred and fifty pieces, there would still remain five hundred guns of large calibre, in strong open batteries, half of them throwing shells and red-hot shot, independent of mortars. This is a force of armament against which no fleets have been tried, not only with regard to the number of guns and weight of metal, but the nature of the projectiles; any single shell fired point blank, and striking between wind and water, being sufficient to sink a ship.

If Sevastopol can be so easily taken by the Allied fleets alone, and without land forces, as some people appear to imagine, it would be very satisfactory to know what amount of resistance it is expected that Portsmouth could offer to an enemy, with her seventy or eighty guns, not above five-and-twenty of which are heavier than thirty-two pounders.

We do not mean to assert that it is impossible to destroy Sevastopol from the sea alone, but we believe

that it could only be accomplished by an unnecessary sacrifice of life and ships with our present means, and that it would be nothing short of madness to attempt it, unless we had a reserve fleet on the spot, sufficiently strong to insure the command of the Black Sea in case of failure.*

In speaking of the means of defence at Sevastopol, we have left the Russian fleet out of the question. This, however, is not to be treated either with indifference or contempt; for, while we are ready to admit that neither in the strength of the ships, in the quality of the sailors, nor in any other respect, can it be compared for an instant to those of England and France; yet there can be no doubt of the Russian seamen being well trained in gunnery, nor of their being endowed with a kind of passive courage, which would lead them to stick to their work, when not called upon to exercise their seamanship, in which they are very deficient.

There were in the military harbour of Sebastopol twelve line-of-battle ships, eight frigates, and seven corvettes; comprising the Black Sea fleet, independent of steamers. We visited, amongst others, the "Twelve Apostles," of a hundred and twenty guns, and the first lieutenant accompanied us over her. She was a remarkably fine-looking ship, in excellent order, and very neat in her fittings. One thing which instantly

* These remarks were written before a land attack on Sevastopol was contemplated.

struck us, was the absence of hammock-hooks, but we learned that beds were luxuries which the Russian sailors never dream of, the decks forming their only resting-places.

On descending to the shell-room we examined one of the shells, and found it fitted with the common fuse. Now, as at that time it was believed that the Russians possessed a percussion or concussion shell, superior to any in the world, we were anxious to ascertain whether this was really the case; but from the inquiries we made of the lieutenant, we are convinced that such a shell existed only in imagination; that the common fuse was in use throughout the service, and may be so to the present day. The ports of the ship were marked with lines at different angles, by which to facilitate the concentration of the guns.

We thanked our conductor for his politeness, and in doing so expressed our admiration of the ship. "Yes," said he, "she is worthy of your praises. She was built on the lines of your 'Queen,' now in the Mediterranean, by a Russian architect, educated in one of the Royal dockyards of England."

There is the same peculation and corruption going on in the ship-building, as in all other departments in Russia; and at Sevastopol everything which proves defective in a ship is attributed to a destructive worm, about which the officials interested in doing so, relate tales almost as wonderful as those of the great

sea-serpent. When a ship's bottom becomes prematurely rotten, as unseasoned timber is *of course* out of the question, the worm is the cause of the mischief; but how this singular creature has managed to pass through the copper without leaving a hole, no one attempts to explain. In the Baltic, where no worm exists, the destructive quality of the fresh water is equally great.

The town of Sevastopol is situate on the point of land between the commercial and military harbours, which rises gradually from the water's edge to an elevation of two hundred feet. It is more than a mile in length; and its greatest width is about three quarters of a mile, the streets entering the open steppe on the south. It was partly defended on the west, towards the land, by a loopholed wall, which had been pronounced by one of the first engineers of Russia as perfectly useless; and plans for completely fortifying the place in that direction were said to have been made; but whether the work has since been carried out we know not, though we have a deep conviction that strong defences will be found to exist there by the time a besieging army arrives. These, however, being hurriedly raised, can neither be of sufficient magnitude nor strength to offer a serious resistance to a long-continued fire of heavy artillery; and unless these fortifications are on a most extensive scale, and embrace a very wide circuit, they may be commanded from so many points, that, attacked with

heavy guns of long range, their speedy reduction becomes a matter of certainty.

None of the sea batteries or forts are of the slightest service for defence on the land side. Indeed, the great fort, "St. Nicholas," has not a gun pointed in that direction; and such an armament would be perfectly useless if it existed, as that part of the hill on which the town stands, rises behind it to a height of two hundred feet. In fact, all the fortresses and batteries, both to the north and south of the great bay, are commanded by higher ground in the rear.

The first and all-important consideration, in reference to an attack on Sevastopol by land, is to ascertain where an army would find the most desirable place for disembarkation. Theodosia has been named amongst other localities, and it has certainly a beautiful harbour and many other conveniences, but the distance from the scene of action is a serious drawback. The troops would have to march over about a hundred and thirty miles of steppe, as it would be necessary to keep to the north of the mountains, where their progress could be easily arrested. Should wet weather set in, this steppe would become, in a very short time, quite impracticable for heavy artillery and baggage, as there are no roads whatever; and our little experience of rain, showed us how rapidly the country became converted into a state closely resembling an Irish bog.

Yalta is another port where men and material

might be safely landed, and where but little opposition could be offered; but although united to Sebastopol by a good road, this is in many places cut out of the face of the perpendicular rock, and could not only be defended by the enemy with facility, but a few hours' work would render it quite impassable.

Between Yalta and Balaclava, on the southern coast, there is no available point; but if the latter port could be taken, and the surrounding heights secured, every requisite for advantageously carrying on operations against Sebastopol would be at once obtained. Distant only about ten miles from that town, and connected with it by an excellent road, Balaclava so infinitely surpasses all other places for the attainment of the object in view, that there cannot be two opinions on the importance of possessing it, and its admirable harbour would be of incalculable value to the fleets.

Nature has, however, made it so strong, that if the Russians have fully availed themselves of the facilities for defence, it might become a work of some difficulty to dislodge them; but it is very doubtful whether they have had sufficient time to erect batteries which could hold out long against the force that could be brought to bear on them.

Supposing the whole of the batteries defending the harbour to be destroyed, no ships could enter with safety until all the positions on the heights which surround and overhang it had been carried.

The coast between Balaclava and Cape Chersonesus being abrupt and precipitous, furnishes no suitable localities for the required purpose, but some of the bays on the northern boundary of the Chersonesean peninsula may possibly be found available.

Were the Allied Armies in possession of the Chersonesus, they would find plenty of water, for there are two good sources towards Balaclava, though independent of it. One of these has been carried by an aqueduct to Sevastopol, and supplies the reservoir, near the public gardens of that place. Destroying this aqueduct would be of no service towards reducing the town, as that from Inkerman would still remain, and the great fitting basin contains an immense quantity. Besides which there are wells and some small streams at the head of the military harbour, whence the place formerly drew its only, though not very plentiful, supply.

Another plan for attacking Sevastopol might be adopted by landing, to the north of the bay of Inkerman, destroying or taking Fort Constantine, and the other batteries from the rear, and thence bombarding the naval arsenal, the town, and ships; and, indeed, this is the only alternative, if a footing cannot be effected in the Chersonesus.

The streets are built in parallel lines, from north to south, and intersected by others from east to west; and the houses, being of limestone, have a substantial appearance. The public buildings are fine. The

library erected by the Emperor for the use of naval and military officers, is of Grecian architecture, and is elegantly fitted-up internally. The books are principally confined to naval and military subjects, and the sciences connected with them, history, and some light reading.

The club-house is handsome externally, and comfortable within: it contains a large ball-room, which is its most striking feature, and billiard-rooms, which appeared to be the great centres of attraction; but one looked in vain for reading-rooms, filled with newspapers and journals, such as are found in the clubs of England.

There are many good churches; and a fine landing-place, of stone, from the military harbour, approached, on the side of the town, beneath an architrave supported by high columns. It also boasts an Italian opera-house, the first performance for the season at which took place during our visit; but we cannot say much for the singing; the company being third-rate, and the voice of the "prima donna" very much resembling, at times, a cracked trumpet. The house itself was badly fitted-up.

The eastern side of the town is so steep, that the mast-heads of the ships cannot be seen until one gets close to them. Very beautiful views are obtained from some parts of the place, and it is altogether agreeably situated. A military band plays every Thursday evening in the public gardens,

at which time the fashionables assemble in great numbers.

As Sevastopol is held exclusively as a military and naval position, commerce does not exist. The only articles imported by sea being those required for material of war, or as provisions for the inhabitants and garrison.

On the eastern side of the military harbour, opposite to the town, is a line of buildings consisting of barracks, some storehouses, and a large naval hospital, which we inspected. The wards are good, but too much crowded; many of the arrangements are bad, and the ventilation in some parts exceedingly defective, the effluvia being most offensive. But perhaps this is permitted on hygeian principles; seeing that the Russian is so accustomed to foul odours from his birth that the physicians may consider a return to a little artificial native air as highly beneficial after a sea voyage.

Sevastopol is not the port of construction for ships of war: they are all built at Nicholiev on the River Bug, as Petersburg is the building-place for Cronstadt. But here all repairs are done, and stores and materials of war in great quantity kept in the naval arsenal.

The works that have been accomplished in the little port appropriated to this department are immense. The quays are well and strongly built of limestone with granite copings, under the superin-

tendence of an English master mason. Along the eastern quay are ten large stone buildings, for store-houses, then in the course of construction, five of which were already finished.

But all other works sink into insignificance at Sevastopol, before those projected and accomplished by Colonel Upton, under immense engineering difficulties. They consist of a great fitting basin, into which open five dry docks,—three at the end, and one on each side of the entrance canal. As there is no tide, these docks are above the level of the sea, and the ships are floated into them by locks, of which there are three, having a rise of ten feet each.

To supply the basin, and thence the canal, the water is brought eleven miles by a beautiful aqueduct of stone, into which the Black River has been turned beyond Inkerman. This passes, at one part, through an excavated tunnel nine hundred feet long, which is constructed on arches in five or six other places.

To form a great reservoir, and thus to insure a constant supply of water, an enormous dike of stone, like those of the pools of Solomon, near Bethlehem, was built across a mountain gorge, but on a much more stupendous scale. Mr. William Upton superintended the engineering department, and the work was achieved with perfect success; proper sluices being constructed to prevent too great a pressure in case of unusually heavy rain.

Soon after all was finished, however, a terrific thunder-storm arose; the valley rapidly filled with water, and a great land-slip from the side of the mountain took place, the sluices were thus blocked up, and the flood at last poured over the top, taking away tier after tier of stones, until there was left nothing of the work of years but a jumbled mass of ruin.

When we stood upon the remaining portion of this masonry, and marked its extraordinary strength and solidity, we could scarcely comprehend how the rushing of any amount of water, could have produced such results.

In order to make sufficient space for the docks, the canal of which leads from the southern extremity of the little port, it was necessary to cut away a portion of the mountain, and on the top of the great perpendicular wall thus made, now stands a massive pile of stone buildings, used as the sailors' winter barracks.

In case of an enemy penetrating the dockyard port, these barracks might be held as a formidable position by men armed with the Minié rifle; and it has been suggested, that a couple of line-of-battle ships in the basin, with their broadsides to the port, and commanding it, would also form a battery of great power. Thus, in an attack by sea alone on Sebastopol, every inch of ground would have to be contested.

A large filter has been erected, from which pipes are carried to the quay, into which a stream has

been turned from the aqueduct, and when a ship requires a supply of water, she or the tanked barges have only to go alongside, a hose is attached to the pipe, put on board, and the process is accomplished with the greatest facility and expedition. No expense has been spared to render this naval arsenal perfect, and we doubt whether, in many respects, there is another in Europe so convenient, always supposing the works projected to have been carried out.

The streets of Sevastopol, as may be expected, teem with soldiers and sailors; indeed, no one unconnected with the services lives there; and all but Russians are discouraged or forbidden to do so. The Jews were at one time ordered away from it entirely, but some few have been allowed to return. It was said that no foreigners were permitted to remain there more than twenty-four hours; but during a sojourn of ten days we met with no interference, although we visited, and curiously examined, all parts of the town, and everything worth seeing in it.

CHAPTER XVII.

A Row up the Bay—Inkerman—An Excavated Monastery—A Town of Caverns—Great Fortress in Ruins—Observations on the Caves of Inkerman—Great Stone Quarries—The Tchernaia Retchka Valley—A Tartar Beauty—The Tower of Tchergouna—A Moonlight Row down the Bay.

ON the morning of the 9th we embarked in the boat of Colonel Upton, accompanied by his son, who not only gave us the pleasure of his company, but the benefit of his local knowledge and information. It was a beautiful day; but when had we had other than beautiful days? At all events wet days had hitherto been so few on our tour, that the reader has been made acquainted with them all, even to the five minutes on the Volga.

To take a row in a boat appears but a simple affair; and there is scarcely a variety of the floating thing bearing that denomination, which I have not been in, excepting always those of the American continent, no part of which has it been my good fortune to visit. From the canoe of the savage to the caïque of the

Turk ; the Dalecarlians' maid's boat in Sweden, and the Tanka girl's in China ; on the Neva, and on the Nile ; on the Ganges, or on the Rhone ; the Lake of Como, and Loch Katrine ; all brought their pleasure. Yet I must plead guilty to an almost childish delight at the thought of an excursion on the water. But such a feeling could only be appreciated by one who, like us, had driven and slept, and nearly lived, in a "tarantasse" for a month.

We are rowing up the bay of Inkerman. Passing on the right hand the careening harbour, some ancient chambers, and a chapel cut in the rock, now used as a powder magazine ; and, from time to time, the beautiful arcades carrying the aqueduct over the inlets of the bay ; and, on the left, the ruined village of Actiar, the navy baking-house, the white cliff, and the light-house ; at length swept into the "Tchernaia-Retchka," here running through a marshy flat of its own depositing, covered with rank vegetation, the prolific mother of miasma.

Disembarking at a little bridge, we walked through the nine hundred feet of tunnelled aqueduct, and then visited the great limestone quarries, whence most—would that we could say all !—of the material for the immense works of Sebastopol were procured.

Returning to the valley of Inkerman, here narrowed by two approaching mountains, we found their perpendicular sides completely dotted over with perforations of various shapes and sizes ; the doors and win-

dows of the queer abodes of the Taures, who fixed their homes where eagles well might build their nests.

Near to the entrance of the tunnel we had passed through, and on the face of the western mountain, we entered a small opening leading to a flight of stairs, on the right and left of which were cells; those on the one hand receiving light from holes cut through the surface of the cliff, those on the other being dark and gloomy.

Having traversed a passage about fifty feet long, we reached a church, or rather the remains of one; for a portion of the living rock in which all these works were cut had fallen, and carried with it half of this curious crypt. Its semicircular vaulted roof, and the pillars in its corners, indicated it to be of Byzantine origin; while a Greek sculptured cross, in the centre of the roof, told that it was a temple dedicated to that religion. The altar, and any sculpture which might have existed near it, are gone, and have long since been burnt into lime, or built into some work at Sevastopol.

Beyond the church we found a large square apartment, entered by another passage, and looking over the valley of Inkerman. A few more cells, resembling those on the stairs, composed the whole of this series of excavated chambers; the arrangement of which at once proclaimed them to have been a monastery. These were the cells, the refectory, and the church. There is nothing remarkable in their

construction as a work of art; yet there is an absence of that roughness and simplicity, which exist in many of the caverns of the opposite mountain; and which indicate their being of a much earlier date than these.

Descending to the valley, we crossed the bridge, to examine the caves of the great perpendicular wall of rock which faced us; and which above, below, on every side, was pierced with openings.

Entering one of them, we got upon a stone stair, and passing some small chambers, arrived at a gallery which led to a most interesting church. On each side of the nave are four square pillars and pilasters, from which spring arches forming aisles and a transept. The altar is in an "apsis," and over it is sculptured the Greek cross of four equal arms. The roof is vaulted, and the arches round; thus being of the same style as that we had previously examined. Its total length is rather more than twenty-three feet by nearly eighteen in width. Going out by another door, we came upon a flat-cielinged oblong chamber, about eighteen feet by thirteen: descending from which, was another flight of stairs, leading to more small caverns, probably the cells of monks.

Returning through the church again, and examining more particularly the gallery, the end of which formed a portico, we found it lighted by a triple semicircular-headed window, and on its right hand some sarcophagi, still containing human bones. There is also a small chapel near, which appeared to be connected

with the tombs. We now followed the eccentric windings of another stair, passing through and into many dens and caverns, all likewise excavated in the solid rock, until at last we emerged from the lower regions, and reached the mountain top.

Here were the ruins of a great fortress or castle: on examining which it was clear, that the whole had not been erected at the same epoch; but that certain parts had been merely repairs or additions to an original building. It is quadrangular in form, situated at an angle of the mountain, which formed the boundary on two sides, the other two being defended by a ditch and strong wall, flanked with towers. We could trace the foundations of houses in parallel lines showing the direction of the only street it contained.

There was one very large reservoir, entering into which were the ends of earthenware pipes, leaving no doubt of its having been used as a cistern for water. The only other opening into it was from the top; but that was much enlarged, from a portion having lately fallen in.

The face of the ditch opposite to the walls, was also pierced by many caverns. And all along the edge of the mountain, on each of its sides, were entrances leading to chambers, in such numbers, that we only attempted to visit a few, but still enough to prove that some consisted of whole suites of apartments, while others were smaller, and many had only a single chamber. Connecting them is a labyrinth of galleries,

and staircases innumerable. There were also holes for fires in the centres of some of the rooms, and the chimneys could be traced, while excavated recesses served as places for beds.

The workmanship of most, and especially of those left on the southern face of the mountain, was rude enough, the marks of the masons' chisels being still upon the sides. All were plain and without ornament; and were in every respect similar to those excavated caverns found in many parts of Syria and Palestine. We could find no inscriptions either in them or on the walls of the castle; but the caves bear the stamp of greater antiquity than the fortress.

The observations and researches of "de Montpéreux"* fully establish the fact, that the mountain caves of Inkerman, were the work of the Taureans, and existed before the Heraclean colonists of Chersonesus called on Mithridates for assistance against Skilosous, the King of the Tauro-Scythes. Diophantes, the general, sent by Mithridates, at once recognising the strength of the position, built a fortress on the edge of the precipice, and called it Eupatorion, in honour of his sovereign.

Whether this replaced a more ancient one, or whether any remains of *it* still exist, is now difficult to decide with certainty, as no inscriptions are to be

* "Voyage autour du Caucase," &c., a work of deep research, which gained the prize of the Geographical Society in Paris in 1848.

found; but it is reasonable to suppose that this castle was strongly built, and that no future possessors would have totally destroyed it.

As some parts of the masonry have the appearance of much greater age than others, it may be fairly presumed that portions of the citadel of Mithridates are still there. Now as the limits of this fortress are circumscribed, consisting, as can be traced by the foundations, of a single street, it cannot be doubted, that a garrison, occupying the heights, would take advantage of the rocky dwellings already existing.

About the middle of the first century, the Tauric Chersonesus was overrun by the nomad tribes of Alains, a people who despised fixed residences, and were therefore very unlikely to undertake so difficult a task as to cut their abodes in the solid rocks. They were overcome by the Goths in the middle of the second century; and two hundred years after hordes of Huns came rolling from the east, to the west, and the Goths were driven to the strong positions of their mountains. The Huns did not, however, remain to take permanent possession of the country; but passed on to seek a wider field for their adventurous passions.

It is probable that, at this time, the number of caves at Inkerman were increased. For a whole people, driven into these isolated fastnesses, would, as a matter almost of certainty, have found them insufficient for their accommodation; and this might

have been the period when the caves in the face of the moat were made.

In the mean time the light of Christianity had shed its benign influence over the Goths, their form of worship appearing at first to have been exceedingly simple. In the reign of Justinian the First a bishop was appointed, for whom they had sent petitions to that monarch.

As monasteries already existed throughout the East, where they had been especially encouraged by Constantine and his mother Helena, it is more than probable that those of Inkerman were excavated in his reign. The monks always chose strong positions, to guard their little communities from the danger of sudden attack, as well as to afford an asylum, in case of necessity, to those of their followers who might require it; and the style of architecture of these cavern churches agrees with that period.

Whether the Goths were at any time followers of the doctrines of Arius is uncertain, but they did not come under the government of the Greek church before the year A.D. 547. They maintained their position under Greek princes until 1475, when the Eupatorion of Diophantes, after other names, had become Theodori, was taken by Mohamed II., and called, by the Turks, Inkerman, from "In," cavern, and "kerman," fortress; the Ctenos of Strabo being applied to the locality, and not to this particular place.

It is certain that the Genoese never held this fortress; and, according to Bronovius, Greek inscriptions and other sculpture still remained in the time of the Turks. These Greek princes appear to have left the Genoese unmolested; indeed, they were not strong enough to take up an offensive position against that people, who were therefore benefited by such industrious and peaceable neighbours; especially as they followed agricultural pursuits, and did not interfere with commerce, which was the monopoly of the adventurous Italians.

"De Montpéreux" gives the translation of an inscription which he had seen, whereon the name of "Alexis, sovereign of Theodorus, and the neighbouring country of the sea," is mentioned, and which bears the date of A.D. 1427.

After the Turkish conquest, the fortress of Theodori, was allowed to fall into disrepair by the garrison, and was finally abandoned to become what it is at present, only a deserted but interesting mass of ruins.

We again descended to the valley to examine the stupendous quarries in the same mountain whence the stone was taken to build the ancient town of Chersonesus, and then proceeded to the southern side, in which most of the oldest caves existed. Nearly the whole of these had gone however, partly from the Russian contractor resorting to this place as convenient for procuring stone for the works of Sevastopol, and partly from a great mass having fallen. The face of

the rock now only presented a number of square recesses and indented lines, the backs of chambers, passages, or staircases.

We would fain have dwelt longer in contemplating these interesting ruins; but we had yet more to accomplish before returning to Sevastopol. So getting into the carriage which awaited us, we drove up the beautiful valley of the "Tchernaia-Retchka," passing by a ruined Tartar mill, which formed an object in striking harmony with the scenery around.

Near this, numerous trees were covered with bunches of that parasitic plant, the mistletoe. Here was a delicious spot for the amorous swain and his mistress to rove about in. Lofty mountains guarded as delicious a valley as ever sparkling stream ran murmuring through to form the bathing-place of Naiades. A thousand cool and luxurious retreats under the shade of impenetrable foliage were there, and varied plants and sweet-scented flowers, not to mention the little white berries over head, beneath whose chaste shadows, rosy lips might meet, and part, and meet again, in all the playfulness of innocence.

In this valley we visited a great reservoir, for the supply of the docks of Sevastopol, which was now about half full, and thence proceeded to view the remains of the still more stupendous one—the reservoir I have already spoken of, and which, had it succeeded, would have provided an inexhaustible quantity of water for every season, and for all emergencies. On our return

we called upon a Tartar family, where we saw for the first time the hair, eyebrows, and nails dyed, which is customary amongst the females. In this instance, the woman recognising Mr. William Upton as the kind benefactor of her husband, allowed the impulses of gratitude to usurp the place of the usual restraints, and came with face uncovered to the door of the cottage as we approached.

She was very fair, even pale, with black, soft eyes, and those fine delicate features, which Canova would have gloried in copying. She would probably have looked more beautiful with her raven tresses, but still the auburn colour they had now assumed, harmonized with a face beaming with intelligence and kindly feeling.

We are in the valley of Tchergouna, which has acquired a celebrity as lasting as its romantic beauty, as having been the retreat, from time to time, of learning and science. Here, surrounded by all that could captivate in sylvan loveliness, a palace stood, in the midst of gardens, watered by a multitude of fountains, shaded by those tall rich poplars, seen only in the sunny vales of the Taurida, and planted by a Moslem land. Once the residence of a Turkish Pasha, it became the property of a member of the Krim Gherai family, and was afterwards inhabited by M. Hablitz, who was the first to write the natural history of the Crimea, and was the intimate friend of Pallas, who often took up his abode at Tchergouna,

and is said there to have composed some of the best passages of his valuable work. Here, also, many other learned men had stayed, and Clarke and his companions were hospitably entertained.

The palace, as it was, has disappeared, and in its place, composed, for aught we know, of some parts of the original edifice, stands the country-house of a wealthy Greek. We called, and found in the spacious "salon" a handsome young Greek woman, in her picturesque and becoming national costume. She conversed freely in French, and performed the office of receiving and entertaining us with grace and elegance.

Within the garden stands a tall polygonal tower, of large size, covered by a dome, and supposed by some to have been built by the Turkish Pasha, as a place of refuge from the attacks of pirates, who sometimes made incursions from the coast which they infested. It has, however, the appearance of greater antiquity than anything Turkish; and we fully agree with other travellers. who consider it either to be of Grecian or Genoese construction; but should decidedly incline to the former.

Clarke says there were some little guns mounted on it in his time, although the building itself appeared to have been erected at a period anterior to the use of gunpowder in the peninsula. We mounted to the top of it, accompanied by our Greek beauty, and

enjoyed a view, though limited, of surpassing loveliness.

A drive back through the Tchernaia Retchka valley, changed from the morning's brightness to the evening's softness, brought us again to the boat, and a row down the Bay of Inkerman by moonlight, terminated one of those days which memory delights to recall.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Leave for Bacthi-Serai—First View of the Town—Enter Bacthi-Serai—Palace of the Khans—Interior of the Palace —Vestibule and Fountains—A Kiosk—The Harem—Legend of the Harem—Dilara-Bikez—The Tombs of the Khans—Short Reigns of the Khans—Reveries in the Palace—The Town of Bacthi-Serai—The Fountains—The Crim Tartars —The Tartar's Capacity for Civilization—The Abodes of the Gipsies—The Monastery of the Assumption—Achelama.

On the morning of the 10th we left Sevastopol for Bacthi-Serai in the "tarantasse," passing to the south of the military harbour by a good macadamised road. A rapid drive of little interest brought us to the valley of Inkerman, where we had another view of those extraordinary caverns which we have described, and now passing along the causeway, (made by Diophantes, near the head of the bay, to render his communication from one side of the valley to the other more facile,) we reached the "Biouk-Ouzane," called by the Russians "Tchernaia Retchka," and in simple language the Black River, over which fifty years ago was an old bridge of three arches, which has since disappeared, and been replaced by a modern one.

We had now entered the country of the Goths, composed of the valleys of "Tchernaia Retchka," of Belbec, Katche, Alma, and Salghir, which comprise land as fertile as it is beautiful. It was across these valleys that Justinian I. built walls and fortresses, which proved of great service to the Goths in a defensive point of view.

These people appear to have been industrious, and to have displayed a greater disposition towards civilization than the barbarous tribes who had preceded, or the Huns who followed, them into the Crimea.

All our thoughts were now concentrated on Bacthi-Serai, the Tartar capital of the Crimea, and the former residence of the khans, which we now approached. We had wandered much, and had almost fancied ourselves too "blasé" to be *astonished* at anything, however deeply we might be interested. But here a spectacle now opened upon us totally different in appearance to all we ever saw before or since. In front of us lay a narrow valley, with mountains rising on each side, of all forms and shapes, and gradually closing in until they met to make a narrow gorge of perpendicular precipices.

At first this approximation appeared the effect of perspective, and seemed to give increased length to the ravine, out of whose bosom shot slender minarets and tall scattered poplars from the midst of crouching houses, which far on looked as if shrinking from

the hanging rocks advancing their grim and hoary heads so near, as though they intended to embrace. On either hand, cut into the steep mountain slopes, were tiers of those half-buried dwellings the Tartars love to live in, but these gradually diminished in number as the mountains closed and became more perpendicular, until at last one here and there sticking on a little ledge, looked like a great cage hanging to the rocky wall.

Domes, too, there were, and cupolas, but of sober tints, for the gold and silver of the Russian churches flaunted not in tinselled obtrusiveness.

High over all was a great kiosk, through the latticed sides of which the beauties of the harem were wont to peep upon the doings of the outer world, or watch the wild warriors mounted on their fiery steeds, in mimic battle throwing the light jereed.

But why have we stopped before this great portal, in a long high gloomy wall, well fitted to enclose the dreary dungeons of a prison? The large gates creak upon their hinges, and are now flung back; we cross a bridge over the dark waters of the Djourouksou, and find ourselves the sole occupants of the immense quadrangle of the palace of the khans.

What sudden change is this from darkness into light? Can it be real? or has the imagination conjured up these varied forms, fantastic and confused, of radiant Oriental colouring; gaudy if taken in parts,

but on the whole dreamy, romantic, and picturesque from the very irregularity of the lines?

Here are the frailest of minarets and the tallest of poplars; here the dome-capped temple of Mahomet, and the solemn sepulchres of the khans; and long rows of buildings, now lower, now higher, with light balconies and verandahs, painted in bright arabesques of red and blue, and shaded by their wide overhanging roofs; their line of high decorated chimneys even forming ornaments. Here, too, is the great octagonal kiosk, or tower, with its far-spreading eaves, and here gushing fountains pour forth their limpid streams, while the atmosphere is redolent of flowers. This, then, was the last domicile of those Tartar chiefs whose word, some few centuries ago, was sufficient to make the earth tremble, and this palace was now to be our temporary abode.

A suite of rooms usually devoted to strangers was placed at our service. They were simply furnished with divans along the sides, which invited to repose; but, alas! to these had now been added those occidental appurtenances, known as chairs and tables. Such common-place articles of furniture of course we banished from our mental, although they would intrude upon our visual, observation; but we regarded them as merely vulgar interlopers.

These apartments opened on a deep verandah, which threw them into a profound and refreshing shade. Hence, after taking a glance at our quarters,

we were enabled to make a survey in detail of the buildings around this great oblong court. The apartments we occupied were at the end of the oblong, and in a line with the arched gateway through which we had entered. The mosque and tombs were on the left hand, and beyond them large stables, and the residence of the Russian governor; while on the right extended the line of irregular buildings, composing the Bacthi-Serai (seraglio of gardens), which gives its name to the place; a wall only being left at the other end, over which could be seen the domed tomb of Marie Potoski, standing in the Tartar cemetery; and the queer-looking houses piled one upon another on the mountain side, forming a singular background.

As it was still early in the day, we determined at once to examine the interior of the palace, which externally had excited such lively interest. Having procured the guide we proceeded to a second court, wherein is the principal entrance, encircled with Oriental gilding and decorations, called "The Gate of Iron," on which are written* the following inscriptions:—

"The master of this door who has acquired this

* The translations of these inscriptions have been given by Pallas and several other writers, which vary but little; but after some research, I think those here introduced are correct.

province, is the very exalted sovereign Mengli-Gherei-Kahn, son of Hadji-Gherei-Kahn. May the Lord God over all deign to bestow supreme felicity on Mengli-Gherei-Kahn, and also on his father and mother!" Below this is written, "The erection of this portal was ordered by the master of two seas and two provinces, the Sultan Mengli-Gherei-Kahn, son of Hadji-Gherei-Kahn (I.) son of the Sultan, in the year 959 (A. D. 1552). The latter inscription is supposed to have been added by Dewlei-Gherei-Kahn, grandson of Mengli, who ascended the throne A. D. 1551, and repaired the entrance.

Hence, by a flight of steps is reached the great vestibule, having passages to all parts of the palace, in which are two fountains. That of "Selsibil," or "The fountain of Marie," became celebrated in Russian song, from having inspired the pen of the poet Pushkin, and over it is written, "Glory to God the highest! The face of Bacthi-Serai is gladdened by the beneficent solicitude of the luminous Krim-Gherei-Kahn. He has, with a plentiful hand, quenched the thirst of his country, and he will endeavour still to shed other blessings around, if God will assist him. After difficulty and care he has opened this excellent spring of water. If there exist another fountain equal to this, let it show itself! We have seen the towns of Damascus and Bagdad, but we have nowhere found a fountain comparable to this. The

author of this inscription is called Cheiker. Let the man who is parching with thirst, read these words through the murmuring waters, which escape by a tube thin as the finger:—and what say they to him? —Come, drink of this limpid stream, which bursts from the purest of sources, and it will give thee health."

On the other fountain of the vestibule is inscribed in red letters, "Kaplan-Gherei-Kahn, son of Hadji-Selim-Gherei-Khan. May the all-powerful God deign to pardon the sins of both, and also those of their fathers and mothers!"

Now we pass into softly-lighted apartments, with satin-covered divans and Eastern decorations; and from them to a lovely kiosk with golden ceiling and marble floors; where the varied lights of coloured windows mingle with the spray of a sparkling fountain, thrown up in fifteen living jets, and again uniting bubblingly below, in a great square marble basin. Luxurious divans surround this pavilion, which stands in the centre of a terraced garden, where bright cascades glide beneath the shade of blushing roses.

Through the large vestibule again we sped to the Khan's great suite of apartments, voluptuously rich in velvets, satins, downy cushions, and soft Persian carpets. How strange that from these couches, which should lull all passions into rest, those fiery spirits should have risen to set the neighbouring countries in a blaze!—to play with human life as though it had

been sent by God to be the sport of man; given but to be destroyed.

Here were the audience-chamber, galleries, and saloons, and the great judgment-hall, on one side of which is a closely-latticed gallery, entered by dark passages covered with thick carpets, and without a ray of light from behind. Into this the Khan could steal unseen, unheard, and there learn whether the Cadi pronounced unbiassed and righteous judgments upon his people.

But now we are proceeding to those mysterious regions, ever by the Moslem held as sacred as his faith; the secret and venerated abode of the females of the house—the harem. Verily there was but slight hope of an escape, if ever the desire to flutter beyond the walls should have entered the brain of any dark-eyed occupant; for the passages were so narrow, that two people could scarcely pass; and thus if the Argus guard should by any chance have been caught napping, not even the yielding silk on beauty's slender form could have got by, without producing sufficient pressure to have aroused again his drowsy senses into watchfulness.

About the harem perhaps our imaginations had been most excited, and here consequently our disappointment was greatest. A series of small rooms leading one into the other were covered with soft carpets of dusky hues, and faded ottomans. The light entering through the close lattice-work of small win-

dows, and the branching trees of the garden beneath, threw a subdued and melancholy shade around; and glad, indeed, must the daughters of the sunny East have been, to fly to that great latticed tower attached to their apartments, and built above the "pavilion of fountains," whence they might look in every direction over the town, and gardens, and mountains. Or how delighted must they have been to splash in the delicious bath appropriated to their use, through which a pure fresh spring was always running, with the twining branches of a luxuriant vine creeping above their heads, whose rich foliage cast its shade on the waters, while the clustering grape, full, ripe, and blushing, hung temptingly, as though inviting the rosy-tipped fingers of the bathing maidens to pluck them.

The harem remains unchanged since the time when its fair inmates were expelled, while the rest of the palace has been refurnished, in its former style, by the Emperor Nicholas; and the dust of eighty years is not likely to have made the former look more lively, though in its best days it must have been a tolerably good imitation of a prison.

The architect, who superintended the renovations, adhered strictly to the original character of the decorations; retouching in the same colours the quaint paintings and flowing arabesques.

Sad as the deserted harem now appears, it has its legends of exciting interest. Here it is said that the

lovely Marie Potoski, brought from her own beloved Poland, full of fresh youth and glowing beauty, passed ten long years, weeping for her native land, and her own liberty, while the Khan, who conquered nations, threw himself a slave at her feet, and tried all that tenderness, and the soft blandishments of love, could do to win her thoughts to him, but in vain; and the silent grave at last closed over the withered flower. The heart too full of sorrow had broken; and a noble tomb still stands proudly over the spot, in which was deposited all that was mortal of the young and beautiful Marie Potoski. What deep pathos is there in this tale! how touching and how sad! Torn from her home, and surrounded by those opposed to her religion, she never ceased to sigh for one, nor to cling to the other.

Unfortunately there is one thing absent in this legend, which we most unwillingly record, and that is truth; but upon this point we must let our authority speak for himself.

De Montpéreux, in writing of this tomb, says, "At Bacthi-Serai all agree in assuring travellers that Marie Potoski reposes there; and Pushkin, in commencing his pretty poem at the fountain of tears of Marie, finishes it at her tomb. Nevertheless there is nothing true in the tradition, not even the foundation. The body which was deposited in this remarkable monument was that of a Georgian girl named Dilara-Bikez, who died in 1178 of the Hegira (A. D. 1764).

What excited general interest was her being a Christian, and in spite of that adored by Krim Gherei, one of the best Khans who ever governed the Crimea. He mounted the throne in 1758, and died from poison in 1769."

This monument is of large size, with a square basement, which changes into an octagon above, and is surmounted by a cupola, which, instead of being vaulted, is composed of triangles, the bases of which rest on the eight sides of the upper wall, meeting in a point at the summit, the tomb being ornamented with attached pillars and niches, and having a small entrance porch.

A great many other interesting tombs are to be seen in this cemetery, some of which have the appearance of antiquity. Against the wall which separates it from, and on the side of the great palace court, is a handsome fountain of marble, erected by the Emperor Alexander, and there are, altogether, about twenty others in the palace.

The tombs of the Khans are enclosed in a walled garden adjoining the great court. They are very simple, consisting of domed temples, in which are plain sarcophagi, with pedestals at the heads, on which are placed turbans; the inscriptions on many are full of poetry.* Within the enclosure is a confused mass

* Kohl says, "Every monument appeared constructed to embody a leading idea. For instance, Devlet Gerai-Khan had one built without a roof, because he considered the

of marble monuments, some falling, but all intermingled with shrubs, vines, and flowers; these are the graves of relatives of the Khans, high officers, and retainers of the court.

These Khans appear to have had but short careers on their thrones. No less than sixteen were buried at Bacthi-Serai between 1654 and 1775; which allows an average length of reign for each of eight years only. The poisoned cup seems to have been resorted to often, and not always to get rid of a bad sovereign, for in the case of Krim Gherei, a good and just prince was thus sacrificed.

The mosque is also a simple edifice, both externally and internally. A staircase leads from the court to a latticed gallery which was devoted to the Khan, and like that in the judgment hall, concealed him from view, while he was enabled to observe all that was going on, and hear the prayers.

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heavens so beautiful and sublime that even from his grave he would wish to look towards the firmament, the abode of God.' Another had had his tomb entirely walled up, because, as the inscription ran, 'he did not feel himself worthy to be shone on by the least ray of God's sun.' On the grave of Toctamuish Khan a vine was planted over his head, 'that he who in his lifetime had brought forth so little fruit might at least in death be more productive?' Selim Gerai Khan had himself buried under the eaves of the roof of the mosque, 'that as the rain dripped down upon him, this water from heaven might wash away the foulness of his sins, which were as many as the drops falling from the clouds.'"

There are many other mosques in the town, variously estimated at from six to thirty. We should be inclined rather to the former than the latter number, though the truth probably lies between the two. That which we have mentioned is the principal one, and held most sacred.

Upon the soft divan we stretch our wearied limbs. Night had long since quenched the torch of day; and yet "tired Nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep," "on his downy pinions" has fled from us. We are in that semi-waking state which is not watchfulness, and yet is not repose; when fancy throws over common things a ruddy light.

Strange forms in varied shape flit before us; turbaned trunkless heads, then mounted warriors, with gay trappings and wild looks, give place to pensive beauty in all the blushing fulness of Oriental charms: now flashes a gleaming scimitar of famed Damascus steel, or now a bearded man* in flowing robes lies prostrate at a damsel's feet; and well he might, for the beams which gleam quickly beneath those dark lashes strike more fatally home than the enemy's weapon. And now he flies to seek in the clangour of the battle that repose he cannot get when near to one he loves. But a sound, half plaintive, half solemn, breaks upon the stillness, and

* No other Tartar but the Khan was allowed to wear a beard.

seems so near reality that we are roused into reason. It is the Muezzin calling from the minaret all true believers to their nocturnal prayers. The vision is gone; we turn round to slumber, and awake in the morning with a vivid remembrance of our dream in the palace of the Khans.

The Empress Catherine II. wisely permitted the Tartars to retain their ancient capital, and it is now even more Tartar than it was at the conquest, for many of the Greeks were then removed, and have not since returned; while the Karaïte Jews, who carry on various trades in the town, reside at Tchoufout-Kale, about three versts distant; but they have adopted the Tartar costume.

Bacthi Serai has about eleven thousand inhabitants, of whom eight thousand are Tartars, eleven hundred gipsies, nine hundred Greeks, five or six hundred Karaïte Jews, who have very much diminished of late years from emigration to other towns; the rest being made up of Armenians and Russians. The latter are "employés" of the Government, at the head of whom is the governor of the palace, who is chief of police, and combines a plurality of offices in his own proper person.

Consisting of one principal street nearly a mile long, with some insignificant offsets, the town has very much the appearance of Karasou-Bazar. Most of the architectural ornaments appear to be con-

centrated in the tall chimneys. The most striking feature, however, is the number of fountains sparkling in every direction; there being about a hundred, independent of those in the palace, of which fifty are in the streets, while the remainder are private. Groups of Tartars may be seen at these fountains, washing and purifying themselves at the hour of prayer, before entering the mosques; as the pious Moslems really practise an adage which their Christian neighbours, the Russians, utterly despise, viz., that "cleanliness is akin to godliness."

Many trades are carried on at Bacthi-Serai, each business having its own quarter: the dyers, who are celebrated, practice their calling on the banks of the river; and the polluted waters of the Djourouksou form a strong contrast to the crystal fountains which flow into it. There are also extensive tanneries, and the cutlery made here is much prized. The Tartars shave with the knives, only moistening the beard with a little cold water.

The streets are narrow, the shops open and everything exposed to view. They are full of life especially at early morning, when the market is crowded, in which is an excellent supply of provisions and fruit. At these times there is a perpetual jabber, for the Tartar in the street appears communicative enough. See him in the "café" and he is an altered character: tactiturn and motionless, he there sits cross-legged on the divan, in the railed-off compartment, smoking his

chibouk, and seems insensible to all around him. Even the clang of the gipsey's harsh instrument produces no visible emotion; nor does the story of the wandering relater of romances excite any external evidences of interest. Yet from both he really derives much pleasure; for his pipe and thick coffee, like the music and tales, are mere adjuncts to the repose he has sought, which any demonstration of excitement would disturb. His enjoyment though passive, is not less profound.

The Crim Tartars are divided into two classes, those of the plain and those of the mountains. Not only do these differ in habits and occupation, but in race; the former are scattered over the steppe of the northern part of the peninsula, cultivating the land and breeding cattle and horses, and building rude houses of unburnt bricks of clay. They bear on their visages the characteristics of the Mongols.

The latter follow many industrial arts, are fond of gardening, cultivate tobacco, flax, and the vine; and display in their physiognomies the type of the Caucasian race. They have more beard than the others, and are above the middle height. They are supposed to be a mixture of various races who have inhabited the Crimea, and resemble the Turks, or other Europeans, many of them having brown hair and fair complexions. They are refined in manner, and dignified in bearing, naturally polite and hospitable, honest in dealing, and frugal in eating.

They were, in the time of their power, fierce in war, but gentle in their homes: strict in their own religious duties, they are still extremely tolerant toward their neighbours.

Indeed this branch of the Tartar family is endowed with many noble qualities; and did not their religion and the policy of their present masters retard the full development of their great capacities, they might rise under the fostering influence of education, to the highest state of civilization; the true elements of which they already possess in an unusual degree.

They are said to be lazy; but it is not to be expected that they should work with alacrity for masters they despise. And it must always be remembered that the Tartars, like the Turks, have generally had their enemies as their historians. These have, with persistent malignity, and deep policy, promulgated falsehood, or distorted facts, to alienate the sympathy of the civilized world from them. The few friends who have taken up their cause have, of course, been overwhelmed; besides which, enmity is ever more active than friendship; it is unscrupulous in the use of its weapons. The dagger of the moral assassin, the poisoned venom of the snake, or the deadly bludgeon of the murderer, are in turn made use of. Fraud and cunning, vile insinuations, or base misrepresentations, following in quick succession, had almost persuaded the European public that these abused people were really what they were represented to be. But

the veil is gradually being drawn aside, and undying truth, though for a time concealed, must at last prevail.

It is not pretended that the Turks or Tartars are perfect. Yet we maintain, that upon many points they are morally superior to the Russians, who have been their systematic revilers. Nor should we as Christians shut our eyes to the fact, that if these people have not been cheered by the pure light of another, and a holier creed; neither have they been plunged into that whirlpool of mental and moral degradation, that deep abyss of infamy, which unhappily, but too surely, exists at the very base of the pedestal on which exalted civilization has been raised.

Starting from the palace we walked through the long narrow street of Bacthi-Serai, until we reached the contracted gorge of precipices which appears to form a huge entrance-gate to the town. Here, again, great numbers of those excavated caverns present themselves, not as deserted sepulchres, but as living abodes; and it is questionable, whether the feelings aroused by seeing them thus occupied, were not more painful than the impressions produced by all their silent desolation; yet they formed fitting homes for their gipsy possessors, whose naked offspring could be seen perched on positions which made one tremble to behold. They looked, as they entered and issued from their black abodes, sometimes lighted in the rear by

the red blaze of the tinker's fire, more like young imps from another world, than specimens of the human form divine. Nor did the appearance of their sires tend to lessen the illusion; for had they been dipped in the foul stream of Acheron, they could not have resembled more the demons of the lower regions, save in this respect, that the latter are lodged in the deep, deep caverns of perdition, while the former find quarters in caves, suspended high amidst the clouds. Strange was such a scene, a scene nowhere found but at Bacthi-Serai.

We now turned an angle of the ravine, on each side of which the rocky crypts still continued, but here were vacant; and at last we came opposite and ascended to the Russian monastery of the "Assumption," cut also high up in the bosom of the cliff. Here eight monks live; but beyond the position and the nature of the dwelling, there is nothing worthy of remark. The flimsy finery of the images in the chapel but ill accorded with the solid rock on which they hung.

This monastery has a certain reputation; and thousands of pilgrims annually resort to it, on particular festivals, who find their resting-places on the roads, or in the neighbouring empty caverns.

A little farther on, some scattered ruins, with gardens running to wildness, were all that were left to tell of "Achelama," the country palace of the Khans,

erected by Krim Gherei. Sweet-scented roses are now entwined with worthless weeds, and twisting creepers cling to what remains of the harem walls. Yet, after all, it was but a frail building, and never could have stood the ravages of time, even though it had escaped a premature destruction.

CHAPTER XIX.

Tchoufout-Kalé—Enter the Fortress Town—The Karaïte Jews—Observations on the Karaïtes—Tchoufout-Kalé, the Capital of the Khans—The Synagogue—The Valley of Jehoshaphat—A Singular Apparition—An Amusing Introduction—A French Blue-stocking—Cain Killing his brother Abel—A Touching Present—The Fortress Town of Mangoup Kalé—Extraordinary Ruins—Palace of Mangoup—Curious Dwellings—Return to Bacthi-Serai.

ACHELAMA has a neighbour of another stamp, which carries us back to the Tauro-Scythian days. It is Tchoufout-Kalé, the Jewish fortress town, built like Inkerman, upon an inaccessible limestone rock, which here pushes its steep promontorial front between two valleys. The very walls rest upon and overhang the precipice; but the whole has an air of such stern solidity, that it might well defy the raging fury of all the elements. It is an imposing place, and is rendered doubly interesting, from forming the isolated domicile of a curious people.

At the base is a living spring, whence the town above draws its supply of water, conveyed by means of barrels, on asses. As we ascended the steep zigzag stairs, cut in the side of the stony mountain, we

passed one of these animals leisurely wending his way to the top—a work of no great facility, with his load.

Arrived at the summit, we entered a small door through a thick stone wall, and at once got into the principal street—narrow, and composed of low houses, built in the Tartar style, with doors only to be seen externally, the rooms opening upon a court, when they did not look over the mountain side. We walked upon the solid rock, and the only sound which struck upon the ear was the feeble echo of our footsteps; for not a living thing was seen, until we suddenly came upon a group of girls, who, seeming scared at our presence, dashed into an open door and disappeared.

At length we did get a boy to show us to the house of the Rabbi, a man about forty years of age, of a dignified demeanour, and intelligent countenance.

The room into which we were ushered was large, vaulted, and lofty, surrounded by a divan, in Tartar fashion, and overlooking the valley of Jehoshaphat, forming a great cemetery. We had scarcely seated ourselves, when mountain honey, grapes, and other fruit were brought, of which the good Rabbi pressed us, with unassuming hospitality, to partake.

These Karaïte Jews differ from the other tribes, inasmuch as they entirely reject the Talmud; accepting only the pure law of Moses. They are remarkable for their integrity of character, and the absence of all

trickery or falsehood; and from these circumstances they appear to have ever held a high position amongst the various peoples by whom they have been surrounded.

The Rabbi conducted us to the synagogue, which he told us was more than a thousand years old; and in reply to our questions, said that the Karaïtes came to the Crimea before the birth of Christ; that their residence at Tchoufout Kalé dates from a very early epoch, and that they were once driven from it by the Tartars; during which period they took up their abode at Mangoup Kalé, but returned again to Tchoufout, when the Tartars evacuated it for Batchi-Serai. We must confess that some of these dates, coming even as they did from so good an authority, appeared to us at the time rather exaggerated; but subsequent researches have led us to believe them substantially correct.

From a number of documents laid before the Historical Society of Odessa, by Mr. Firkowitsch, and quoted by the Baron Haxthausen, it appears that the most ancient Karaïte monument of the Crimea yet discovered goes as far back as A.D. 640. The oldest epitaph is on the tomb of Isaac Sangari, in the valley of Jehoshaphat, and bears the date of A.M. 4727, which is 767 of our era: thus is there convincing proof that Karaïte Jews lived at Tchoufout Kalé, nearly eleven hundred years ago; and it follows as not improbable,

that at that time, or soon after, they possessed a place of worship there. So far is the account of the Rabbi supported by reliable and strong presumptive evidence as to the age of the synagogue.

In one of the manuscripts, dated early in the tenth century, the first appearance of the Talmudist Jews in the Crimea is spoken of, which proves two things: first, that at that period the Karaïtes had no knowledge of the Talmud, and consequently, that they had never rejected it, but had followed from the beginning the simple laws of Moses which they still profess to do. And secondly, the fact of their ignorance of the Talmud shows that they must have entirely separated from the other tribes before any new doctrines or traditions were added to the original Scriptures; and also that their removal must have been to a considerable distance, since it so completely isolated them from their race as to allow century after century to roll on without their ever having even heard of doctrines which had been adopted by nearly the whole Israelitish people.

It does not, therefore, appear so improbable that they might have been in the Crimea, and if in the Crimea, at Tchoufout Kalé, at a much earlier date than has been generally supposed; and the immense number of their tombs in the valley of Jehoshaphat confirms this hypothesis; while those still existing at

Mangoup Kalé, also denote a lengthened sojourn there.

Kirkor (the ancient name for Tchoufout), it is certain, was the capital of the Khans, about the year 1400, and was probably so half a century before. It was not evacuated until after the downfall of the Genoese in 1475; when Mengli Gherei Khan founded the new Tartar capital at Bacthi-Serai. Now this would be the period at which the Karaïtes returned to their former abodes, having been absent upwards of a century; but it does not follow that they were the sole possessors of Mangoup Kalé; for living respected as they did by their neighbours, they might have had an asylum granted them by the independent princes who still held that stronghold.

It has been suggested, that Tchoufout Kalé was at one time in the possession of the Genoese; but there is no historical evidence to prove such to have been the case, while there is much to support a contrary opinion.

The Karaïtes are strongly attached to Tchoufout Kalé, and the Rabbi told us it was originally fixed upon by their ancestors from its resemblance to Jerusalem, which, by the way, is very marked Should this tradition be true, it would indicate their settlement here soon after quitting Palestine, and while the image of the Holy City was still fresh in the memory of some of them. There is, however, but little doubt that the Karaïtes occupied Tchoufout

Kalé after some other people, and that they did not build it themselves.

The synagogue, which stands in the only garden of the town, and where the Feast of Tabernacles is held, was scrupulously clean. It contains a very old and interesting manuscript version of the Book of Moses, the date of which I regret to find omitted in my Notes. The principal ornaments are some silver lamps, also a large tank of the same metal, with an inscription, given by the present empress.

From the synagogue we went to visit a fine monument in stone, erected as a tomb for Nenekedjan-Khanyn, the daughter of Tokhtamiche Khan, who died A.D. 1437. It is neglected, but not entirely in ruins, and enough remains to show that it was handsome and possessed an elegant portico. Tradition throws a romantic interest around the memory of this Tartar princess, about whom several different legends exist; in all, however, she is represented as young and beautiful, and as having fallen desperately in love with an individual objectionable to her father, and to have fled with him. The amorous pair having been pursued and overtaken, the lover was killed, and the fond girl, unable to bear his loss, in the agony of despair, threw herself from a precipice.

The father, filled with desolation at the sad fate of his child, had this monument erected and deposited her body therein. The difficulty in the conflicting accounts is, to decide whether the gallant was a

young prince put in possession of Kaptchak, said to have been wrested from Tokhtamiche by Tamerlane, a young Genoese gentleman, or a Tartar Mirza.

Tchoufout Kalé consists of two hundred strongly-built stone houses, only seventy-two of which were inhabited at the period of our visit, by as many families, out of eight hundred formerly residing there. These were rapidly diminishing from extensive emigrations to other towns in the Crimea and the south of Russia, where wider fields are open for a more profitable exercise of the intelligence and energy possessed by the Karaïtes than can be found at Bacthi-Serai. Extensive ruins attest that it was at one time a very large and populous town.

Built upon the point of the calcareous promontory, it was defended in the rear by a strong wall running from one precipice to the other, which yet exists, and through which we passed by a gate in our exit from the fortress. Both this door and the one by which we entered are closed at night after the return of the Karaïtes engaged in business at Bacthi-Serai.

On our way back we walked through the valley of Jehoshaphat, and amidst its thousand graves, placed in parallel rows, covered with neatly-cut stones, having a raised part at head and foot, and inscriptions in Hebrew. Pallas designates these from their shape, "bicorn" tombs. The setting sun now

threw the long shadows of some fine old oaks and other trees across this neatly-kept repository of the dead. Hanging over the valley and beneath the houses of Tchoufout Kalé, are more of those caverns excavated in the face of the rock.

The Karaïtes have many privileges bestowed on them by the Russian Government, which have never been extended to the other Jews. Amongst these is the entire management of their own town. This forms the only instance on the records of modern history of any branch of the Israelitish family enjoying a municipal government. Both men and women are handsome, having the characteristic features of their race.

The morning sun was brightly shining when we emerged from our divan on to the verandah of the "Seraglio of Gardens," there to take full inspirations of the refreshing breeze which came sweeping over the mountains and valleys. Absorbed in deep reveries of Tartars and Karaïtes, of fortresses and tombs, of desperate lovers and disconsolate maidens, we walked up and down, when a singular apparition arrested our attention.

Forgetting, in our astonishment, the ordinary rules of politeness, we felt our eyes gradually expand into a fixed and unmitigated stare. Before us stood a figure surmounted by a broad-brimmed high-crowned hat of straw, and wearing a pair of loose pantaloons

tucked into high Wellington boots, while a black paletot, with an order on the breast, could not conceal the tail of a short petticoat which peeped below. In the unwhiskered and unbearded countenance was a cigarette, the smoke of which came in quick puffs from the small mouth that held it.

To what variety of the human species did this being appertain? My mind rapidly ran over all the races we had met with in Crim-Tartary, Jews and Greeks, Armenians and Tartars, Italians and Gipsies, Noguais, Germans and Russians, but nowhere could it find a resting-place whereon to fix the likeness of this odd specimen of humanity. Nor was it less puzzling to decide whether the sex was of gender masculine or feminine; for with the softness of the latter there was mixed a kind of manly carriage, an off-hand manner, which left the mind in deep perplexity.

But happily this was but of short duration, for André came to our relief. "Voilà une demoiselle Française bien savante," said he, "who will have much pleasure in being presented to you. Such an agreeable intimation could not of course fail to produce reciprocal emotions of happiness; so we hurried down the flight of steps, and there, in the centre of the great court of the Khan's palace, André, with a dignity and grace which would not have been discreditable to the master of cerêmonies at a county ball, introduced us to the talented but eccentric Mademoiselle Jaquemart.

The impromptu introduction, the parties composing the group, the situation, and, indeed, the whole affair presented such a mixture of the serious and ludicrous, that it would have formed a rich scene in a dramatic performance.

After a short conversation, Mademoiselle Jaquemart proposed seeking the shade of one of the gardens, and there, seated beneath the spreading branches of a beautiful acacia, surrounded by blushing flowers and bubbling fountains, we held a long and interesting conversation, not on love, but on the archæology of Crim-Tartary.

Mademoiselle Jaquemart was in fact a blue-stocking; and the study of the antiquities of the Taurida was one of her particular manias. But her talents were not confined to a single object: she was a linguist; drew well; and had a considerable amount of wit, with the power of caricaturing. Connected with which we afterwards heard the following anecdote.

Mademoiselle Jaquemart possessed in the Crimea an adjoining estate to a Russian Prince, who was haughty in manner, had a high opinion of his own importance, and was peculiarly sensitive to anything which affected his dignity. Now the eccentric maiden, either for profit or amusement, kept a certain number of pigs; who, owing to the dilapidated state of their sties, having no restraints put to their roving propensities, were often found taking promenades through the flower-gardens and grounds of her proud

and irascible neighbour. Complaints were made, accompanied with threats, which produced no very conciliatory feelings on the part of the lady; and the pigs continued their airings as usual.

Endurance now being stretched to its utmost limits, one fine day the pigs having postponed their accustomed walk to a later hour, the enraged Prince rushed for his rifle, fired, and one of the innocent squeakers fell struggling in the agonies of death, upon the very strawberry-bed where he had too confidently hoped to find a combination of epicurean delights. The sad news soon reached Mademoiselle Jaquemart; but she allowed no outward signs of her emotion to appear. She appealed not to the law, for she was no match for her antagonist in the power of bribing; so she resorted to the weapons with which nature had endowed her to punish the offender.

She sketched an exact likeness of the great Prince in caricature shooting the pig, and writing beneath it these words, "Cain killing his brother Abel," sent it in an envelope to the nobleman; whose fury knowing neither bounds nor judgment, led him to enter an action against his fair satirist, thereby exposing the deep wound his pride had received, and perpetuating its pain. Before saying adieu to my eccentric acquaintance, she wrote in my pocket-book the following: "Jaquemart.—Chanoinesse.—Connaissance de Mon-

sieur De la Martine." Not that any such memorandum was necessary to make me remember her; but I was destined to receive a more especial mark of her kindness: for at the moment of our final departure from Bacthi-Serai, she sent me a sketch of the tomb of Marie Potoski: a present of deep and touching sentiment; but such a one as might be made with perfect propriety by a Chanoinesse; especially when she had reached the age of fifty, and smoked cigars. It was received with pleasure, and is still retained in memory of that "tête-à-tête" in the garden of *fountains* and flowers.

The Tartar horses and the Tartar guide are at the door: we have fitted ourselves into Tartar saddles, composed of apoplectic looking cushions, strapped tightly across the centre, and we are off to Mangoup Kalé.

Winding up the mountain at the back of the palace, and overlooking the cemetery, we had a splendid view of the town, unique and romantically picturesque. The tall, green, and graceful poplars were most appropriate rivals to the slim, pale, and delicate minarets; while each appeared in silent dignity to preside over its own particular district. Passing through several secluded, and charmingly-situated mountain villages, we reached the lovely valley of Belbec, ravishing in its fresh and laughing beauty; and thence passed over hills and through dells that

"Cuyp" or "Claude" would have gloried in painting: until at length we stood before the grand, the astounding ruins of the fortress town of Mangoup Kalé.

We had been delighted with Inkerman and Tchoufout Kalé, but about this new object of interest there was something so full of awe and majesty—something so imposingly magnificent and forlornly wild—that it elicited strange mixed feelings of sorrowful astonishment and pitying admiration.

The origin of Mangoup Kalé is involved in mystery, but the best authorities refer the most ancients parts to a period anterior to the settlement of the first Greek colonists in the Crimea. Its subsequent history is probably very similar to that of Inkermann, as it formed for so many centuries the capital of the country of the Goths, and was at an early date the seat of a bishoprick. Pallas believed that it was held by the Genoese, and this opinion has been shared by other writers; but there is an accumulation of evidence from more recent researches too strong to permit the adoption of this hypothesis. The fact of an independent prince keeping possession of it up to the moment at which it was captured by the Turks, in 1475, seems to be placed beyond a doubt; but the uncertainty of its origin, or the absence of details respecting its various occupants, diminish not the interest which such extraordinary ruins can scarcely fail to arouse.

Following a steep, rough path, the bed of a mountain torrent, we reached a thick, stone wall, built across the chasm, and defended by several towers. Beyond this we passed the Karaïte cemetery, containing an immense number of tombs of the same description as those at Tchoufout Kalé, and denoting a lengthened residence, for some of them were very old, rather than the temporary sojourn of that people mentioned by the Rabbi.

We now approached a second wall much longer than the first, also flanked by strong towers, which formed a defence for the town on the only side which nature had left it unprotected. Below this barrier is a beautiful spring and reservoir, affording a plentiful supply of water. Here we turned to the left, and rode to the point of another promontory, which commands a magnificent view over the surrounding country—embracing Sevastopol and the Black Sea in the distance.

Returning and passing through the wall, the full extent of the deserted town and its utter desolation burst upon us. Mouldering and crumbling ruins in every direction struck the eye, over which a profound and unnatural silence reigned. This place, heretofore teeming with life and the active passions of man was nothing now but a blank and dreary solitude, and we almost felt like intruders within some sacred precincts, so deep and solemn was the stillness.

Amongst the remains of buildings least decayed, were those of a Greek chapel and a mosque. The foundations also could be traced of what might have been a synagogue of the Karaïtes, mentioned by some writers as formerly existing. Small Greek and Turkish cemeteries there were, the monuments of the former being broken and thrown down, while the scattered stone turbans of the latter indicated that some sacrilegious hands had been equally unsparing of the Christian's and the Moslem's graves.

Beyond the ruins of the town, from which it is separated by a third wall of great strength and battlemented, stands the citadel, on the blunt point of the promontory, surrounded on all other sides by fearful precipices a thousand feet in perpendicular depth.

Built into this wall, which forms its back, is a handsome palace overlooking the citadel, but having no opening on the opposite side. It is of two stories of solid masonry, and ornamented with bass reliefs. Some of the windows are curious, being square-headed externally, while they consist of pointed arches within. A terrace runs the whole length of the façade, and in its perfect state this must have been an imposing edifice. In this building, according to Martin Bronovius, the Khans on several occasions shut up Muscovite ambassadors who had been sent to them, where they were kept under the strictest "surveillance," Amongst these was Athanasius Nagof;

who was confined here by order of Deulet Glorei Khan in 1569 together with his suite.

The edge of the rock is everywhere pierced with openings for staircases leading to excavated chambers, and houses, sometimes of two or three stories; often communicating with each other by narrow galleries notched in the face of the giddy height, and possessing no marks to indicate their having had any barriers to guard them from the frightful abyss beneath. The brain quite reeled at the thought of traversing these little ledges, more adapted for the perching-places of birds than the passages of men.

The largest and most curious of the dwellings in this great town of caverns is at the extreme point of the precipice. It is entered by descending a flight of steps, conducting first to a large chamber, having a kind of balcony: from this by another staircase, a great apartment is reached, into which six small rooms open. All these chambers are in the living rock, and nothing can describe the extraordinary view obtained from their windows. It is this point which Clarke speaks of as the "Cape of Winds;" but we are inclined to think that the "Elli Bouroun," or "Cape of Storms," of the Tartars is applied to a neighbouring promontory. Near the opening to this palace of caverns, on the top of the rock, are some solid foundations: so thick in comparison to the size of the building they supported that in all probability they formed the basement of a tower.

We spent many hours in exploring these singular ruins, of which my short description can convey but a most imperfect idea. There was in general a display of greater skill in the workmanship of the crypts than we had remarked either at Inkerman or Tchoufout Kalé: and some of them were clearly of a later date than others. Their number, including those on various parts of the rocks to which we have not particularly alluded, together with the town built on the plateau, must have been capable of accommodating a large population: and if the tombs can be taken as an indication of its nature, we might at once decide that the Karaïtes formed the majority.

Added to the devastation which probably took place at its siege and capture by the Turks, Mangoup became the prey of a terrific fire about eighteen years after that event, which caused its complete destruction; and no attempt was ever subsequently made to rebuild it. Some Karaïtes, however, continued to reside there until the beginning of this century, where they carried on the business of tanners; since which time it has been completely deserted.

We descended by a different valley to that by which we had attained the summit of the mountain, and found *it* also enclosed by a fortified wall and gate, and taking another route, did not reach Bacthi-Serai until the evening was far advanced, by which time we were heartily tired of our Tartar saddles. We returned next morning to Sevastopol.

CHAPTER XX.

The Ruins of Chersonesus—Tumuli—Monastery of St. George—Entrance to the Monastery—Leave Sevastopol—A Last View of the Fortifications—Eupatoria—Reach Odessa—The Streets—The Suburbs—Public Buildings—The Letter of Introduction—The Chief of the Police—The Prison of Odessa—Life near the Quarantine Harbour—Russian Corruption—Sufferings of the Soldier—Permission to Embark.

AT the commencement of the sixth century before Christ, a body of Greeks from the town of Heracleus, in Asia Minor, founded a colony on the peninsula formed by the harbour of Balaclava, and the bay of Actiar or Inkerman; which includes the most westerly part of the Crimea, and was called the Heraclean Chersonesus.

They built a city on the smaller peninsula, washed on the west by the waters of the Black Sea, and on the east by one arm of a deep double bay. This town, named Chersonesus, was already in ruins in the time of Strabo, shortly after the birth of our Saviour. Nothing now remains of it but scattered stones and the foundations of houses.

After the destruction of this place, another town was built on a promontory to the west of the qua-

rantine harbour, and about a mile and a half from Sevastopol, which took the name of "New Chersonesus," and rose to considerable wealth and power as a republic.

Its ruins, until the time of the Russians, were very extensive; but great quantities of the hewn stone have been carried by them to Sevastopol to form material for building there. Parts of an ancient fortress, some old walls, and a Greek church, however, still remain; in the walls of the latter are some beautiful Ionic capitals, and other parts of a more ancient building, and it has been conjectured that these were the remains of a Greek temple built into a Christian church. It was in this town, after conquering it, that the Grand Duke Vladimir of Russia was baptized and received into the Greek church, A.D. 988; and from that period to the present the Czars have made their religion the great political implement wherewith to govern an ignorant people, and a cloak beneath which they have managed, and still desire, to rob their neighbours.

One cannot walk amidst the ruins of Chersonesus free from profound regret and indignation that so many beautiful relics which even the Tartar had spared should have been utterly destroyed by the barbarism of the Russian soldiers. Much of this appears to have been done from sheer wantonness, and subsequent to the period at which the Government had given orders to preserve what then remained.

At Chersonesus Vladimir not only embraced a new religion, but was married, according to its rites, to a Christian princess: thus was this city the birthplace of the Russian's faith, consecrated by the baptism and marriage of their prince; but for all this, finally annihilated by their Vandalism. Karamsin, their own historian, says—"When our troops took possession of the Crimea, many of the walls (of Chersonesus) were yet entire, together with the beautiful gate of the town, and towers. They exist no longer; for the stones of them have been taken for the construction of Sevastopol. The quantity of sculptured marble found amongst the ruins proves that the Chersonesiens were also fond of luxury."

Near to the remains of Chersonesus are some tumuli which have been cut into without finding any graves. One is an enormous mound, and, like the hill of Mithridates at Kertch, is composed of broken pottery, earth, and other things, as though all the rubbish of the town had been thrown there. This also has a deep, wide cutting from the outside towards the centre, but no tomb has hitherto been found; while in a few mounds the stones forming parts of buildings have been discovered heaped together. From these circumstances it is concluded that the Chersonesiens did not deposit their dead in tumuli, as at Kertch, but in tombs excavated in the rocks, which are still to be seen at the head of the quarantine harbour.

About nine miles south of Sevastopol, built into a rocky height, overhanging the Black Sea, is the Greek monastery of St. George, in a locality replete with classic interest. We arrived there in the afternoon, when the sun from the south-west lighted up every cranny in the rocks, as if expressly to show off their dreary nakedness. Beneath us the dancing waters seemed, in playful fondness, to embrace the feet of the great precipice, and then retire, half in coyness, half in fear, but only to gather fresh boldness for a repetition of the joyous kiss.

Here stood that temple, dedicated to Diana, in which the lovely daughter of Agamemnon, the fair Iphigenia officiated as priestess; herself a victim offered up for immolation to the goddess, but spared to exercise on others the cruel rites which she had fortunately escaped. Hence, then, were thrown the remains of those Greeks, sacrificed upon the marble altar of the Virgin, whose worship required, and whose wrath could alone be appeased, by streams of human blood. Perhaps the very spot on which we rested, had oft been stained with the gore of the mangled corpses of the wretched shipwrecked mariners.

We descended by a narrow, zigzag path, cut in the face of the mountain, on every nook or ledge of which the monks have planted trees and flowers, making little terraced gardens in the midst of the black and charred cliffs. From the shore we looked up and per-

ceived the monastery, some hundreds of feet above us, and fifty feet beneath the summit of the precipice.

Near to us, on the right hand as we faced the sea, was a great, isolated, basaltic rock, rising above its neighbours. Beneath the shade of this might Orestes and Pylades have landed, and been seized by the cruel king of the Taures. Then that noble struggle followed between the two friends, as to which should offer up his life to save the other, and the mutual recognition of Iphigenia and Orestes, with the full burst of a sister's love and brother's joy. From this very spot might have embarked the friends, the priestess, and the stolen statue of the goddess, and along this shore have crept the bark that carried them far from the inhospitable coast, Orestes glad to have accomplished his vow, and at the same time to have torn a sister from such inhuman occupations. Pylades rejoiced at his friend's success, and Iphigenia only too happy to fly from the place where, for so many years, her life had passed in deeds of blood.

Thus we allowed imagination full range, determined to believe the popular tradition, which makes this the true site of those events, and leaving the more learned to decide whether the rugged point of Crion Metopon possesses greater claims.

The monastery of St. George hangs, as it were, to the face of the cliff, and the only entrance to it is by a door and flight of steps cut in the rock at its sum-

mit. From a little terrace in front, a magnificent view over the Black Sea is obtained, and projecting into it on the left is the Aya Bouroun, or sacred promontory, on which also a temple of Diana is believed, by some, to have stood; as, however, several of these existed on the coast of Tauris, there can be no doubt of one having been in the locality of the monastery; but whether it was there that Iphigenia officiated is a question we shall not here enter upon.

Crowds of pilgrims go to this monastery on the 23rd of April, the "fête" day of St. George, when the plateau near it puts on the appearance of an immense fair; booths, tents, and huts are erected in great numbers, and all kinds of things are sold at the various stalls. Nearly the whole of the Greek population of the Crimea flock there. It is most especially popular with the fair sex, and report says that on these occasions, when the Greek women display their charms to the greatest advantage, there is an assemblage of beauty rarely to be met with elsewhere.

The time had now arrived to quit Sevastopol; we had explored every part of the arsenal and the town, had seen much more than strangers are generally enabled to do, and, independent of the interest arising from this source, our time had passed agreeably, from the kindness of our friends. We, therefore, prepared to leave this magnificent port, where all the fleets of the world might anchor in safety, and where the

natural formation of the bay and harbours are admirably adapted for the purpose to which they have been applied.

On the 18th we embarked in a Government steamship for Odessa. Our fellow-passengers consisted of the representatives of a dozen different nationalities, and chattered away in as many tongues; but this we were now so accustomed to, that it almost passed unnoticed. Everything about the ship herself appeared quite familiar; she having been built, fitted out, and furnished in England. This is the case with all the war-steamers in the Black Sea. We crossed at a subsequent period from Odessa to Constantinople in the "Chersonesus," a corvette, and fine vessel of her class; the ship and every article on board being of English manufacture.

On leaving the harbour we had another opportunity of taking a general view of those extraordinary fortifications which we had previously examined in detail, both on shore and from boats; and our opinion was confirmed, that with all their defects, whether in scientific principles or in carelessness of construction, a great sacrifice of life would follow an attack by sea alone with our present armament. But there appears no reason why England and France, with the talent and resources they have at their disposal, should not with facility produce artillery of a weight and range so great as to batter down these fortresses in succes-

sion, while at the same time their own ships remained comparatively free from danger.*

We touched at Eupatoria, a small town to the north of Sevastopol, where we remained five hours; but for what purpose it was impossible to guess, all the business of the ship appearing to have been accomplished in half an hour. However, we soothed our impatience to be moving onwards, and went on shore to beguile the time as well as we could The town has nothing remarkable about it. The inhabitants are composed of Karaïtes, and Tartars; the former carrying on a successful trade. We visited the synagogue, one of the best possessed by this sect in Russia; and found it like that of Tchoufout Kalé, remarkably clean, and in other respects worthy of inspection. Here much wheat from the steppe of the Taurida is shipped, and salt from the saline lakes which abound on the coast.

The view of Odessa from the sea is very commanding. A majestic line of stone houses of Grecian architecture, forming a handsome "boulevard," built on the edge of a cliff, about two hundred feet high, the abrupt termination of the steppe, which sweeps from the borders of the Euxine to the Arctic Ocean, without an intervening mountain, rendering the climate here in the winter excessively severe.

A magnificent wide range of two hundred stone

* These remarks were written before the late experiments were performed with Mr. Lancaster's gun.

steps, in ten flights, between which are landing-places, ascends from the quay to the boulevard, opposite to which is a bronze statue of the Duke of Richelieu, who being appointed governor in 1803, by a wise administration raised the town in eleven years to an extraordinary degree of prosperity.

No difficulty was placed in the way of our landing, coming as we did from Sevastopol; but very different is the fate of the unfortunate wight arriving from the Bosphorus. Then he undergoes a lengthened process of fumigation and purification, and is shut up in a lazaretto for fourteen days, by the end of which time he is supposed to be free from the contaminating influence which an abode within the Turkish dominions is at all seasons imagined to produce.

We soon made an agreement for apartments at the principal hotel of the town, on the boulevard, and overlooking the Black Sea; the arrangement being much facilitated from our still travelling "à la Russe;" that is, having beds, bedding, cooking apparatus, and in fact everything necessary to make us perfectly independent, either of the landlord or his servants. For without these, even in what has been called the "Queen of the Euxine," one may have some difficulty in obtaining sundry articles essential to comfort. Advanced as Odessa is said to be, it has not yet arrived at that state of refinement which provides superior accommodation for the traveller. The hotels very much resembling large straggling barracks.

This town enjoys more privileges than any other in Russia. It had an immense grant of land from the Empress Catherine, and was made a free port, that is to say, its import duties were reduced to about one-fifth of the usual rate, and the revenues thus derived retained for the benefit of the city. Under these circumstances, it ought to present features of unusual magnificence, which it does not, though it must be regarded as a remarkably fine town.

The streets are very wide, and, in general, are planted with rows of acacia trees; they are only partially paved, and, during the whole of our stay, the wind raised clouds of white dust positively blinding.

In the morning and evening they are full of life; the former being devoted to business, the latter to relaxation, while the heat of the day is appropriated to rest, and at this time the town appears deserted.

The shops are fine, and well supplied with European goods; but it appears that the literary taste of the inhabitants is easily satisfied, for we visited nearly every bookseller in the town, and found a singularly poor collection of works, and but few of those calculated to elevate the mind of the reader. We were not a little astonished at being unable to procure a single copy of any book on the Crimea, in this one of the chief cities of Russia.

Immense magazines for corn, well built of stone,

and resembling palaces with the windows removed, are dispersed amongst the ordinary dwellings, giving to some of the streets a melancholy and deserted appearance, and forming a strikingly characteristic feature of the town. It is not surprising that splendid buildings should have been raised to store up this grain—the source of unbounded wealth to many of the inhabitants.

In the suburbs are numerous villas, but it is questionable whether these are much cooler or more agreeable than the houses within the town; for the dust seemed to take a particular fancy to playing around them in large pillars, and swept up by frolicsome whirlwinds. The roads passing amongst them were so abominable that, accustomed as we had been to accommodate ourselves to every species of jolting, we could sometimes scarcely keep our seats in the droschky: it was the steppe over again cut up into a thousand ruts, which, even after the lengthened dry weather, and the perpetual movement, had not been ground down to a state of bearable smoothness.

We could almost imagine some of the stories told of horses and vehicles disappearing in a sea of mud, after the spring thaw, being not very far removed from the truth. Indeed, the good people of Odessa seem to live one-half their time in a semi-state of suffocation from the dust, and the other half in danger of being swallowed up altogether by the mire. Yet, in the latter respect, the town is said to have immensely improved within a few years.

There is a large public garden, also in the suburb, which we found in very bad order. No kinds of trees appear to flourish well unless the ground is trenched, a substratum of chalk existing near the surface.

The museum is a handsome building—contains some antiquities, nearly all of which are from the Crimea, and amongst them a few marbles from Chersonesus. The theatre, or rather opera-house, is good, and evidence of the greater wealth of the place was found not only in its internal arrangements, but in the superiority of the Italian company over that of Sebastopol, the singing here being exceedingly good. The house was well attended, and proved a convenient place for observing, at a "coup d'œil," the mixed character of the population. Every country of Europe furnishes some members to the community of Odessa. The Greeks predominate as merchants, while the Russians of that class are very few in number.

The custom-house, exchange, an Imperial college, and Prince Woronzoff's palace, are the other principal buildings, and the Lazaretto is an important one. We found a morning visit to the latter rather amusing. A garden planted with acacia trees is arranged on one side, with a series of dens, precisely like those occupied by the wild beasts of the Zoological Gardens, Regent's Park, and separated from the public by three partitions of iron grating. Into one of these dens, the lion intended to be shown off to his

anxious friends, is turned, and they can make tender inquiries after his health, in a loud voice through the wires of his cage, or, if necessary, transact business with him.

We have before spoken of a letter of introduction to the chief of the police, given us by Colonel ——— whom we had met in the Crimea. This we hastened to deliver, though the external appearance of the epistle, derived as the paper was from the corner of a dirty cupboard of the hotel at Yalta, and spread out upon a not less dirty table to be written on, seemed anything but likely to insure a favourable opinion for us. However we were not inclined to throw aside all hope of attaining our object; and we thought such very affectionate contents might probably neutralize the questionable character of the envelope.

On arriving at the office we were ushered into a large room, furnished with a long table, and about a dozen well-padded easy chairs, and having the appearance of a council chamber. Here we waited some time, until a middle-aged gentlemanly person, in the full uniform of a colonel in the army, made his appearance, and concluding him to be the sought-for individual, we at once presented the "billet."

The first impression was manifestly not what we should have most desired, and a scrutinizing glance was cast upon us by an eye evidently accustomed to look deep into the thoughts of those whom it surveyed.

The letter was read, the address examined, the paper turned from one side to the other, and the suspicious-looking document again and again deliberately spelt over. No enigma could have been more puzzling to solve than were these three lines of extreme affection.

As a dark frown gradually gathered on the brow of the reader, we began to suspect that the polite intimation of our gallant acquaintance, that he kissed in imagination the hand of his friend's wife, might have caused a momentary feeling of jealousy.

At last despairing of a solution by any other means, he appealed to us; and perhaps from habit, rather than from design, commenced a course of cross questioning which we considered uncalled for by the circumstances, so without answering the interrogations, we simply communicated our desire to visit the prison.

This appeared to astonish him, as much as he had before been puzzled, and some more questioning was the result, which was cut short by our saying, that if we were making an unusual or objectionable request, it should be instantly withdrawn. At this the police magistrate vanished, and the gentleman appeared, so assuring us with great urbanity, that it would give him considerable pleasure to be of service to us, he wrote the desired permission, and five minutes after we were at the gates of the principal gaol of Odessa.

We were immediately admitted, and accompanied by a superior-looking man, some attendants, and a file of soldiers, we proceeded to inspect the prison of which Colonel —— had spoken in such rapturous admiration. Comparing it with others in Russia, we have no doubt the praises bestowed on it were merited. The floors of the rooms and cells were of asphalte.

The place was not clean according to English ideas, but judged after Russian notions, it might be regarded in that respect as perfection. It was well ventilated, and a little more whitewash would have made it look very decent. We entered several cells, where some wretched beings were condemned to solitary confinement. They were dungeons similar to the dark cells in the gaols of England, into which not a single ray of light was permitted to enter. One of the men whom we saw thus incarcerated was a murderer, sentenced to death, a penalty said never to be carried out in Russia, unless the condemned confesses his crime, which in this instance had not been the case.

On entering these cells we were always preceded by some of the soldiers with fixed bayonets, which, judging from the personal appearance of the poor creatures in them, was an unnecessary precaution.

In a common room were several prisoners, who were clean in their persons, comfortably clothed, and had the appearance of being well attended to. This

being a model prison had had a great deal of attention bestowed upon it. But while it had not reached a state with which no fault could be found, it was, nevertheless, very creditable to the authorities, for it must be remembered that all changes of this description are gradual.

The reform in prison management is but recent even in England; and has, at the present moment, far from attained a point which can be deemed in every respect satisfactory.

Odessa has, strictly speaking, no harbour. Placed at the head of an open bay two moles have been formed, one of which is devoted to vessels of war and coasters; and the other, called the quarantine harbour, is occupied by foreign merchant shipping.

Great activity and movement is always going on in the neighbourhood of the latter. Droschkies fly along as though they were racing against time. Telégas and waggons, carrying corn, hides, and tallow to be shipped, or bearing back the produce of other parts of the world, after it has undergone the necessary amount of preparation, crowd the road, and often block it up. Merchants' clerks, government officials, and mobs of labourers, seem all absorbed in their occupations, and the only idlers in the scene are occasional strangers like ourselves, intruders from curiosity into the arena of business.

The citadel immediately overhangs the quarantine harbour, besides which, there were at the period of

our visit a few insignificant batteries, forming but an indifferent defence towards the sea.

We had been put to very little inconvenience with our passports on entering Russia, and had travelled more than five thousand English miles within the Empire without any impediments whatever; but the great difficulty was to get *out* of the country. Had we exercised a little bribery we should probably have settled all our affairs without any difficulty, but this was contrary to our creed.

The excessive corruption of the Russian officials of all grades, not only in the civil, but in the military service is notorious. In travelling through the country, we heard of it on every side, and it also often became painfully visible in the persons of the poor soldiers, reduced to mere shadows of the serfs who surrounded them, however badly the latter might have fared. We noticed this even at the camp of Krasno Selo, under the very eye of the Emperor; and as we receded far from the Imperial ken, it was often saddening to see the moving skeletons, on whom the greatcoats hung like the garment of scarecrows, consisting of paletots suspended on poles.

It will easily be understood that where this corruption is universal, it becomes utterly impossible for one man to eradicate it, however much he may desire to do so. Should he appeal to the general no information can be gained; for this officer is the chief

delinquent. The colonel, too, has had his share, those of lower rank their pickings, and if the juniors have not yet tasted the sweets of peculation, they look forward with hope to the happy moment when they too may help themselves. Thus all are interested in aiding and abetting each other, and in concealing the truth from the higher power.

It is said that the Emperor has made immense efforts to arrest this outrageous system; and that he has even resorted to the plan of calling on the men to state their grievances. In a few instances individuals bolder, or more desperate than their comrades, stepped from the ranks and made known their complaints; but it was soon remarked that the wretched creatures who dared thus brave their superiors shortly after disappeared; and suspicion, that keen-eyed investigator of such deeds, whispered mysteriously that the latter event was but too closely connected with the former. Such *impertinent* appeals from the starving victims were, therefore, quickly discontinued; and the vultures that fed daily on the flesh and vitals of the soldier slave, lived on and fattened upon their inhuman prey.

Even the judges are susceptible of the soft influences of bribery, and the man who cannot support his cause, however righteous, with the necessary number of rubles, must go to the wall. In cases where stolen property is recovered by the police, although the delinquent may have been punished for the offence,

the articles seldom find their way back to their rightful owner; and in the few instances where they do, it is only because he happens to be a person too high in power to be braved with impunity.

Our permission to embark was signed by the officials of five different departments; and sharp, indeed, would have been the luckless wight who could have escaped so many Argus eyes, had the description on his passport not tallied with his personal appearance. However, we were at last pronounced free by these functionaries to quit the Russian dominions; and on the 22nd of October we were on our voyage to Constantinople, with bounding hopes and bright anticipations of all we were going to see in Turkey, Syria, Palestine, and Egypt.

THE END.

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